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CAMERA PRESS

Kohl alarmed by opposition to unity

Nation state's day is over, Britain told

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

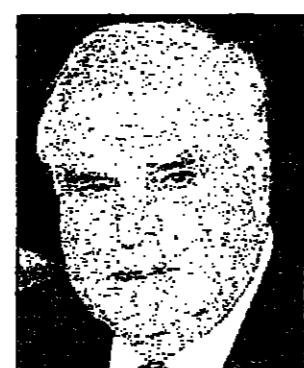
HELMUT KOHL, the German Chancellor, yesterday urged Europe to turn its back on the nation state and resist efforts by Britain at the Maastricht review to slow down the advance to deeper integration of the Union.

In a strong speech at the University of Louvain, Herr Kohl sounded a note of alarm over the growing opposition to the plan for monetary union and the other steps towards greater union set out in the Maastricht treaty. Europe seemed to be in a "period of uncertainty in which the very continuation of European integration was being questioned". He did not believe, however, that the Europeans have become tired of Europe again.

Herr Kohl said there were grave dangers in slipping back to old ways and recalled Germany's invasion of Belgium in the two World Wars. "European integration is in reality a question of war and peace in the 21st century." He endorsed the remark made last year by the late President Mitterrand of France that "nationalism is war".

"We have no desire to return to the nation state of old. It cannot solve the great problems of the 21st century. Nationalism has brought great suffering to our continent." This did not mean, however, the creation of a super-state. "It does not and never will exist," he said.

The Chancellor set out Ger-



Kohl: "A question
of war and peace"

man demands for the review of the Maastricht treaty at the inter-governmental conference (IGC). Most of them are opposed by Britain and the Major Government is committed to setting out its terms in a White Paper before the conference gets under way at a summit in Turin on March 29.

A setback at the IGC would put Europe back for more than a generation, Herr Kohl said. He also emphasised that while the European Union was preparing to take on more members, "the slowest ship in the convoy should not be allowed to determine its speed". The maritime metaphor was adopted by Herr Kohl and President Chirac of France last month to depict Britain's refusal to accept any deeper integration.

"If individual partners are not prepared or able to participate in certain steps towards

integration, the others should not be denied the opportunity to develop increased co-operation," he said.

The warning reflects frustration over the British Government's stance. Continental leaders are aware that any state can use its veto to block changes to the EU treaty. Britain is far from alone in resisting aspects of the German agenda. France's Gaullist presidency is loath to cede more than a little ground on increasing majority voting and it does not want the European Parliament given more power. Sweden and Finland do not want to participate in a common defence.

Britain is closer to Germany than France on the need for rapid enlargement of the EU to Central and Eastern Europe. Herr Kohl, who was receiving an honorary degree, said it would be "disastrous" if enlargement were to dilute the Union's strength. "I would find it equally disastrous if Europe were only able to derive its strength from keeping others out," he said.

For Germany, the top priority at the IGC was strengthening the common foreign and security policy. All members except Britain concede that this means a move to more qualified majority voting. Herr Kohl also made clear that Germany had a duty to take part in a pan-European policy to dispel the distrust it had earned from its history and economic power.

BY ALAN HAMILTON

BUCKINGHAM PALACE was reeling last night from its worst security breach since Michael Fagan sat on the Queen's bed and asked for a cigarette.

A fox has penetrated the garden and killed the royal flamingos.

Stunned palace officials

told yesterday how police had

discovered the mutilated bodies

of six birds close to the ornamental pond that had been

their home since 1959, when

they were presented to the

Queen by London Zoo.

The only remaining bird, which appeared to have survived the attack, died of shock. The Queen has been

laid in the 40-acre grounds, where the flamingos have long been a favourite of garden party guests.

Last night, the palace said

fresh footprints believed to

belong to the murderer had

been found, but no arrest had

been made. The attack is

thought to have happened last

Friday during a particularly

cold snap when the pond was

frozen, so denying the birds

the natural protection of

water.

The palace, always reluctant to discuss security, would not say how the fox had

entered a garden that is

surrounded by a high brick

wall topped with barbed wire.

"We are taking counter-

measures," a spokeswoman

said darkly, admitting that

the area, despite the instal-

ation of many extra security

devices, was still not fox-proof.

The birds were clearly happy here, and had a very good diet: we fed them twice a day with Dutch cockles and shrimps to keep them pink," the spokeswoman added.

"We used to send them to London Zoo in winter to keep warm, but the travel proved too stressful for them and one died. So we built them a hut in the middle of the pond, where they could keep warm."

News of the massacre did not surprise flamingo experts

last night. Simon Tonge, senior curator of London Zoo,

said: "Foxes do kill exotic birds with monotonous regularity. Central London is full of urban foxes, who normally live out of dustbins and in ordinary people's back gardens. But when the weather gets really cold they become desperate, daring, and no respecters of royalty."

Mr Tonge cast doubt on a

fox's ability to scale a 12ft-high brick wall, and suggested that the culprit had probably slipped unseen through a tiny gap in one of several gates, normally locked and bolted, that give access to the palace garden.

Flamingos, predators per-

mitting, enjoy remarkably long lives and although there

is no Debrett-like family tree of the palace birds, they may

well be survivors of the original colony. Zoologists know

of a pair of Australian flamingos that have recently cele-

brated their fiftieth birthday

and the oldest known mem-

ber of the species reached 60.

The palace said last night

that it would now have to

think carefully about replacing

the birds.

"We certainly won't even

consider it until we've caught

the fox," the spokeswoman

added.



Flamingos: fed on shrimps and shrimps

Fox kills the Queen's flamingos

Outcry at
Hanson
closures

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

HANSON yesterday said it was cutting 2,300 high-street jobs at Powerhouse, the electrical retailers, and closing 195 stores.

The industrial conglomerate, chaired by Lord Hanson, which this week announced plans to split its operations into four new companies, started widespread protests over the closure programme which is being finalised.

Yarrow, the warship builders on the Clyde announced 1,600 job losses and warned that there would be further job cuts unless the Government places orders with the yard for Royal Navy frigates.

Powerhouse doubts, 25
Yarrow cuts, p26

The Times on the Internet
<http://www.the-times.co.uk>

IRA is blamed for AK47 attack on policeman's home

BY NICHOLAS WATTS, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE IRA was believed to have been responsible for an attack on the home of an off-duty police officer in which 57 shots were fired yesterday. The Northern Ireland Office said they were unaware of any motive for the shooting near Moy, Co Tyrone, but the weapon used has been identified as an AK47 assault rifle and detectives believe the Provisionals were involved.

The part-time RUC reservist had been attacked before by the IRA and as a result certain security precautions were taken, like the fitting of bullet-proof windows.

"The house was attacked by a very heavy calibre rifle which smashed all the bullet-proof windows and which actually cut and drove through the tiles of the roof of the house, and completely destroyed its car," David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, said. "Over the last few months there have been an increasing number of violent incidents. There is an absence of a commitment to peaceful means and that does not augur well for the future."

As Unionist MPs called on Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein president, to condemn the attack, Sir John Wheeler said the shooting underscored the need for all paramilitary organisations to disarm. He said:

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Simon Jenkins on

the peace

process

endangers the

process of peace

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Libby Purves on

a new Britannia,

in Weekend

Richard Morrison

on the

transatlantic

showbiz war

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Leading article, page 21

Ashdown agrees to 24-hour bodyguard after car arson

BY ANDREW PIERCE AND ADRIAN LEE

PADDY ASHDOWN last night agreed to round-the-clock bodyguards at his constituency home in Somerset after his car was destroyed by a petrol bomb early yesterday.

Mr Ashdown's Vauxhall Senator erupted in flames at 4am outside his thatched cottage in the village of Norton sub Hamdon near Yeovil. It was parked in a nearby garage which was badly damaged.

Detectives investigating the arson attack, only two months after Mr Ashdown was confronted by a knifeman, said that the Liberal Democrat leader had received anonymous threats. A brick was thrown through his car window several weeks ago.

The spate of threats came after Mr Ashdown's investigation into racist attacks on three Indian restaurants in Yeovil. Only weeks before the knife incident Mr Ashdown founded the Partnership Against Racial Harassment.

The police took the threats, by telephone and letter, so seriously that surveillance equipment was installed in the MP's garden. It was later removed.

Mr Ashdown, 54, a former Marine commando who served with the Special Boat Squadron in the Far East, and his wife Jane were asleep in their house when their car was

destroyed.

Police said they were hunting

two men seen acting

suspiciously near the

Ashdown cottage. They were

spotted by officers on a routine

patrol a few hours before the

H registration car was de-

stroyed. The Senator was Mr

Ashdown's personal car. He

has a government issue Rover

for official duties.

The powerhouse
new bestseller
from

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IN THE PRESENCE
OF THE ENEMY

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US reluctant to take public stance on proposal

Clinton 'leans' on Adams to reconsider elections

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER
AND TOM RHODES
IN WASHINGTON

THE Clinton Administration privately urged Gerry Adams to reconsider his opposition to Britain's plan for elections in Northern Ireland when the Sinn Fein leader visited the White House on Thursday.

Publicly the Administration has adopted a position of strict neutrality towards the controversial British plan but a senior White House source contradicted that stance yesterday. Asked whether Mr Clinton and Tony Lake, the President's national security adviser, had leaned on Mr Adams during their meeting on Thursday, he said that was a "fair conclusion".

Before that meeting the White House had been embarrassed by reports suggesting the Administration would encourage Mr Adams to accept the British plan, and went to considerable lengths to counter that idea.

Mr Adams' meeting with Mr Lake was upgraded into a two-hour lunch. Mr Lake and Nancy Soderberg, the White House Irish affairs expert, took the rare step of escorting Mr Adams to meet reporters outside the West Wing in a gesture designed to reinforce the impression that there had been no pressure.

That evening British and Irish reporters were given a briefing to reinforce the assertion that the administration had neither endorsed the British plan nor encouraged Mr Adams to accept it, and that the American role was simply to listen, encourage and offer suggestions that might advance the peace process.

Mr Adams insisted that "this wasn't a meeting about pressure" and the official White House statement did not mention "elections". It said merely that "other ideas" contained in Senator Mitchell's report last week "should be urgently discussed in the political track of the twin-track process".

The issue of elections has divided the British and Irish governments and the Administration is understandably loath to take any public stance that might alienate one side or the other and impair its hard-won reputation for impartiality.

Michael Ancram, the Northern Ireland Minister, met Mr Lake on Monday night and Tuesday to argue that elections should be viewed as a "door not a hurdle" to all-party peace talks, and were the only way the unionists could be persuaded to participate short of the IRA beginning to decommission its arsenals.

Mr Adams is adamantly opposed to elections as a precondition for all-party talks and told Irish-American congressmen this week that John Major was merely erecting new barriers to peace.

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The policeman's home in Moy, Co Tyrone with bullet holes in the walls and windows

IRA blamed for gun attack

Continued from page 1

"Everyone in Northern Ireland will now be watching and waiting to see and hear what excuses are made for this wicked attack which robs them of confidence in building the peace process."

"They will expect all those genuinely committed to democratic methods to condemn this attack without reservation. Once again it reminds us all of the need to remove all illegal arms from Northern Ireland," Sir John said.

The Government was careful last night not to link any group with the shooting.

Mitchel McLaughlin, the Sinn Fein chairman, said he was disturbed by the shooting, but he refused to condemn it. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, he said: "I think the timing was very curious whatever intention people had in carrying out that incident. We must hope that it was an

isolated one." Asked on Radio 4's *PM* whether he would condemn the shooting, Mr McLaughlin said: "No. I think those who have been conditioned to knee-jerks in these situations haven't really made a contribution in making sure they don't happen again." The shooting came as the peace process took an important step forward when Sinn Fein and

the Ulster Unionists took part in the World Economic Forum. Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary who was in Davos, said: "I think it is a very good thing that common cause should be made explaining what a good place Northern Ireland is for investment."

□ The funeral of Gino Gallagher, the reputed leader of the Irish National Liberation Army who was shot dead earlier in the week, passed off peacefully in Belfast yesterday. The RUC allowed the funeral to take place after the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the political wing of the INLA, agreed not to mount a paramilitary display. Mourners clashed with the RUC on Thursday when a guard of honour wearing masks and sunglasses tried to accompany Gallagher's coffin.

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Whiskey down drain shows the Americans are serious

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

ANY doubts that Irish politics spans the globe were dispelled this week when the Mayor of San Francisco poured a bottle of fine Ulster whiskey down a drain to protest against allegedly anti-Catholic hiring practices at the distillery.

Old Bushmills Irish Whiskey comes from the village of Bushmills in Co Antrim. In California the company is being embarrassed by claims from Irish Americans that the only Catholics it has employed in recent years are a PR executive and part-time summer tour guides.

Mr Adams is adamantly opposed to elections as a precondition for all-party talks and told Irish-American congressmen this week that John Major was merely erecting new barriers to peace.

Mayor Willie Brown is the first black person to hold the city's top job, and was a victim of segregation during his

Texan youth. A spokesman said he "wants to send a statement to the world that, at least as Mayor of San Francisco, he wants justice for all throughout the world, including for Catholics in Ireland."

The Mayor poured the whiskey down the drain in front of an Italian bar at a press conference. Next week a public hearing is to be held and a vote taken on a resolution to require San Francisco's bars to boycott Bushmills whiskey. Thanks to America's second-largest Irish Catholic community after Boston, the resolution is "almost certain to be passed unless Bushmills drags a busload of Protestants to City Hall", says Walter Hinkel, a local columnist who

says he is of Irish origin. "Fortunately, whiskey drinkers have plenty of brands to choose from. If you're drinking Bushmills, it's like driving a Volkswagen during the Second World War."

The distillery says that 21 per cent of its workforce is Catholic and is expected to send representatives to next week's hearing. They are likely to receive a rowdy but good-natured welcome. Nigel Heneghan, spokesman for the Irish Distillers Group, the parent company, said: "The company adopts a completely fair employment policy."

In North Antrim at the last election, about 33,600 people voted for Unionist parties and 8,400 for nationalists.

Labour MP bids for New Statesman

Geoffrey Robinson, the millionaire Labour MP for Coventry North West, is to become the new owner of the left-wing magazine *The New Statesman*, which was put into administration last month. Mr Robinson is understood to have offered £500,000 to purchase the title, with the promise of a further £250,000 to help to clear debts.

The weekly title, once the pre-eminent voice of the Left, was placed in administration last month after Philip Jeffery withdrew day-to-day backing. Mr Robinson's offer has been provisionally accepted but because the company is in receivership the offer has to be approved by the courts.

Low-level flights call

The families of the victims of the Chinook helicopter accident yesterday called for an end to the Ministry of Defence's use of passenger flights for low-level flying-training. At the inquiry into the disaster in which 29 people, mostly anti-terrorist experts, died, the families' solicitor said they had been distressed to learn that their loved ones had been placed at some risk by the flight being used for the purpose.

Gold smuggler jailed

A former constable who recruited his policewoman daughter for a £20 million gold smuggling operation has been jailed for two years. Michael Gilmore, 53, paid Lucy, 25, a pittance in "expenses" to become a criminal. Knightsbridge Crown Court in London was told, Gilmore, of Bridgnorth, Shropshire, had earlier admitted conspiracy to cheat by evading VAT due on the smuggled bullion.

Clergyman leaves wife

A senior Church of England clergyman has shocked the Church by announcing that he has left his wife and is living at a friend's house. The Rev David Ford, 52, a former chaplain to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, broke the news to regular members of the Ripon Cathedral congregation in a two-line letter. He made clear that he and his wife would be living apart for personal reasons.

Chemical firm fined

A chemical company was fined £150,000 with £142,000 costs yesterday after a gas cloud escaped from a factory and caused a massive blaze. Two hundred firefighters tackled the inferno that engulfed Associated Octel's plant in Ellesmere Port on the night of February 1, 1994. Chester Crown Court was told that the company had pleaded guilty to two charges under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Brothers on parade

Three brothers will today lead the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. Lieutenant Colonel Sebastian Roberts, 42, with Cassian, 34, and Fabian, 23, will be the three commanding officers at the parade by the Irish Guards. It is a coincidence that the brothers are serving in appropriate ranks of the same regiment at a time when public duties fall to the Guards. Today is also Cassian's birthday.

Child sex guide shelved

A sex guide that includes how to find under-age prostitutes abroad is being withdrawn by its British publisher. *Sex Heaven*, a £60 book providing information about foreign bordelloes, strip shows and bars, has been available from Scope International of Havering, Hampshire, since 1993. The company said that although it still had copies, the book had been withdrawn.

Tourist curbs, page 10

Professor appointed

Quentin Skinner, 55, Professor of Political Science at Cambridge University since 1978, is to be the next Regius Professor of Modern History at the university. He succeeds Professor Patrick Collinson, who is to retire on September 30. Professor Skinner's *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (1978) has been named as one of the 100 most influential books of the past 50 years.

Vauxhall issue recall

About 32,000 Vauxhall Frontera four-wheel drive vehicles are being recalled because of exhaust pipe problems. Vauxhall said an isolated case of exhaust pipe fatigue had been identified in a Frontera, and that models produced before January 1993 were being recalled to have protective shields fitted to the tailpipes. The vehicles will also be inspected for any possible faults in the front brake hose.

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Judge allows woman the right to influence life of severely disabled son

Over-protective mother wins fight against jail threat

By EMMA WILKINS

A MOTHER who was accused of being over-protective towards her severely disabled son won the right yesterday to influence his life. Marjorie Vickers, 54, appealed successfully against a High Court ruling that threatened her with prison if she interfered with her son's freedom to make his own decisions.

Her son Steven, 18, suffers from cerebral palsy, spastic quadriplegia and speech and learning difficulties. His application to prevent his mother's interference in his life was made by the Official Solicitor last June, on his behalf.

Mrs Vickers, from Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, was supported in the appeal by her husband, Peter, 57. The couple adopted Steven when he was a baby and discovered he had cerebral palsy when he was one. "I am very pleased with the ruling," Mrs Vickers said outside the High Court. "Now I just want to get back home to my family."

Under the terms of the ruling made by Mr Justice Johnson last June, Mrs Vickers faced jail if she interfered with her son's choice to be a weekly boarder at a special school near the family home. At the original hearing, the court was told that Mrs Vickers was over-protective towards her son and sometimes kept him home from school, saying he was ill, when doctors said he was not. She also resented professional advice.

She would not allow him to develop socially and was happy for him to sit on a sofa without physical or intellectual stimulation, the court was told. Kirklees District Council, which became involved with the family when Steven was eight, recommended that he should attend the special school where he could experience companionship and be educated.

Mrs Vickers, who wanted to keep Steven at home, had tried to prevent him staying at the school and Steven was eventually taken into care two years ago. The care order was due to run out on his 18th birthday, so the legal action was started on his behalf.

Sir Stephen Brown, president of the family division of the High Court, sitting with two other appeal judges, said the family could not possibly benefit from action by the court. The threat of an injunction would only put strain on the family and risk destroying the home that Steven loved, he said. Granting the appeal, Sir Stephen said Mrs Vickers now accepted that her son was benefiting from attending the special school.

The prospect of Steven enforcing an injunction against his mother and her ending up in jail was appalling, Sir Stephen said. It was doubtful whether Steven understood the concept of prison, let alone an injunction, he added.

"I have considered this matter with great care and sympathy because the motives of everyone involved are of the highest — they are all devoted to achieving the best for Steven," he said. "No one doubts that the love that the parents have for this boy and that they wish to make his life better, but the pressures have been dreadful."

The mother has found it difficult to surrender the care of Stephen to others. There was a period when she frustrated the attendance of Stephen at a special school. Nobody has ever criticised the devotion of the parents or suggested that there is any



Marjorie Vickers wanted to keep her son at home instead of sending him to school

question of ill treatment or neglect. This is a case where the devotion of a mother has been so intense that it has not been possible to look after Stephen's development in a way that is appropriate, by him going to this school."

Sir Stephen said Parliament might like to clarify the legal

rights of people who are severely physically disabled but are not mentally impaired. Despite his disabilities, including the ability to speak only a few words, Stephen is mentally capable, according to the law.

The ruling to allow the appeal and discharge the in-

junction, was supported by Lord Justice Waite and Lord Justice Morris. After the ruling, Stephen Switalski, the family solicitor, said: "It was an extremely sensitive, moving judgment and everyone is delighted and relieved."

Leading article, page 21

Hard sell takes fringe theatre into West End

By ROBIN YOUNG

A LITTLE-KNOWN fringe theatre company made its debut in the West End last night thanks to its members' success in making money while "resting".

Counterpoint's production of *The Long and the Short and the Tall* by Willis Hall was transferred at short notice to the Albery Theatre in the West End after only three performances in a converted church in Brixton, south London.

Counterpoint, formed in 1994 by three graduates of the Webber Douglas Drama School, funds itself in the success of a telesales company which its members established to employ out-of-work actors.

Ian Francis, Counterpoint's commercial director, said yesterday: "We realised we needed to do something more profitable than bike deliveries or working behind bars while resting, so we formed our own telesales company. Professional Communicators. We are now making £100,000 a year."

Mr Francis added: "Actors are much more persuasive and intelligent than the usual double-glazing salesman. We have two contracts with conference organisers and we do a lot of telephone canvassing. Our results are often three times better than customers have had before, so they are delighted."

When producer Bill Ken-

wright, prompted by a review of Counterpoint's previous production in *The Times*, wanted to transfer *The Long and the Short and the Tall* at short notice, the move was possible, Mr Francis said, "because when we say we have the money, to do something, people will know it is there".

Professional Communicators now employs 16 resting actors, while Counterpoint's founders, Simon Lenagan, Adam Maggido and Phil Pickard are all in the cast of *The Long and the Short and the Tall* with Mark Arden and Burt Kwouk, established actors the company could only attract and pay because of Professional Communicators' profits.

Tony Doherty of the Brixton Shaw Theatre, formerly St Matthew's Parish Church, said: "Counterpoint were only here for three performances instead of four weeks but we know we will be compensated. The move makes sense for Bill Kenwright, who had a theatre dark. This was a well set-up production that could be moved quickly."

More than 5,000 tickets have been sold for *The Long and the Short and the Tall* at the Albery, where it will have a 4½-week run. The play was first staged in 1959. Its author went on to collaborate with Keith Waterhouse on many projects.

Yard officer tells of infiltrating drugs operation

By STEWART TENDERLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A SCOTLAND YARD officer who helped to foil a huge drugs operation has described how he posed for nine months as a drug smuggler.

The officer was involved in Operation Dash, aimed at a criminal "entrepreneur", Bobby Mills, who was eventually jailed for 11½ years for a plot to smuggle cannabis worth £18 million.

It was the first co-ordinated operation involving police, Customs and Excise, the Royal Navy, and specialist troops. Mills, a former bookmaker, had been sentenced to ten years in 1981 for taking part in a cannabis ring.

Using the name "Michael", the police officer infiltrated a gang which planned to use a merchant boat to import cannabis from Morocco. The *Poseidon* was to rendezvous in the Atlantic in the summer of 1993 with a smaller vessel, the *Delwan*. The drugs would be distributed in England in bogus fish vans.

The detective sergeant said: "I flew to Ireland and we went 600 miles out into the North Atlantic to meet the main ship. We transferred on board six tonnes of cannabis. We were on a small fishing boat hitting against the Atlantic swells and we were also hitting against the other ship which was five times as big as ours."

He said: "The crew of the main ship were casting blocks of cannabis weighing 30lb — they were throwing them from their decks to ours. We had

Wildfowler shoots pet goose by mistake

By PETER FOSTER

A WILDFOWLER was trying to placate an entire village yesterday after he mistakenly bagged Horace, its pet goose.

Steve Davies, 36, was out with his gun at dusk when he mistook Horace for a wild greylag behind a flock of ducks and shot it.

"But it was only the next day I realised it was Horace. I was mortified because I used to take my little girl along the river to feed him. If I had known it was him I would never have pulled the trigger," he said.

Mr Davies immediately went down to the village of Wark in Northumberland to apologise to local people, who had taken Horace, a Chinese cross, to their hearts after he used to rummage for food in children's pockets when they stopped to stroke him on nature walks.

One resident said: "Some people have told him never to darken the village again." Another said it was a disgrace that the much loved goose had been killed for sporting pleasure.

June Walker said: "He once disappeared for six weeks and the village was in turmoil because we thought he had flown away. Then one day he came sailing down the river with a dozen ducklings in a line behind him."

Mr Davies has decided to go on a Caribbean holiday while village tempers cool.

Signing kicks Dallaglio into the Midas touch

By JOE JOSEPH



Dallaglio's earnings could reach £500,000

sport having turned professional, and with Carling and Guscoff likely to bow out in a few years, Dallaglio stands to become rugby's biggest money-maker by the time of the 1999 Rugby World Cup.

If he continues to shine as brightly on the field as he does today, Dallaglio could be earning £500,000 a year by the turn of the century. His annual England salary of £34,000 could swell to about £100,000 in a couple of years, topped up by an equal salary from his club. Sponsorship deals — he already wears Nike boots — and television appearances should make up the rest.

"Lawrence is not money-grabbing in the slightest," Mr Lindsay said. "He comes over as a very clean-cut, sensible young man. But more than that, he performs brilliantly on the field. He is a thinking rugby player."

He will soon be a jolly rich one, too. Will Carling and Jeremy Guscoff are the big earners of rugby. But with the



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THE SUNDAY TIMES

Test of time



I collect my books and head off for my first lesson. I feel very nervous, yet I dimly recall this sensation: it's being a new boy, and it's not a sensation that, as a married 33-year-old with two sons, I expected to experience again...

What would it feel like to go back to school? David Mills, posing as a sixth-former, finds out — The Sunday Times tomorrow

Vice-chancellors back down from threat to impose levy as Shephard offers peace talks

Universities defer decision on £300 entrance charge

BY DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

VICE-CHANCELLORS stepped back from voting yesterday on proposals to charge university entrants £300 after an eleventh-hour offer of talks from Gillian Shephard.

The university chiefs left their threat of an entry fee for undergraduates in 1997 at the table ahead of a meeting with the Education and Employment Secretary on Tuesday.

Mrs Shephard's offer was made the evening before the vice-chancellors' emergency meeting in London yesterday when the 104 academics agreed the plan should be put to their governing bodies.

The national executive of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals is still recommending a fee be brought in if planned cuts in funding go ahead and this year's 37 per cent drop in capital funding at least partially restored. The vice-chancellors' main aim is to reform

the funding system so that student loans can be paid back according to their income once they have graduated and are in employment.

It emerged yesterday that ministers are considering a major inquiry into the financing of universities. But the vice-chancellors are hoping for more immediate action which may come in the form of a Green Paper on higher education. Mrs Shephard's own year-long review of it is due to report soon.

If all Mrs Shephard has to offer is another review, she will further antagonise the universities. One leading vice-chancellor said yesterday:

"We are not going to have any truck with a major study which kicks everything into touch until after the next election. The idea they want to start all over again is just laughable."

Professor Gareth Roberts,

committee chairman and Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield, said after yesterday's meeting he would be seeking signs of compromise from Mrs Shephard. Professor Roberts said: "In the absence of a long-term solution all universities are forced to continue to explore all possible options including the registration levy."

He continued: "Our recommendation is that the levy really is a last resort. It would only be triggered if the Government cut us back yet again next November. We are seeking some agreement from the political parties that this huge expansion in higher education has just got to be paid for."

Yesterday's meeting was held up for an hour when 50 student protesters from the Campaign for Free Education burst in and demanded to air their views on how the education system should be publicly funded. However, the National Union of Students welcomed the move to postpone a decision on a levy.

Jim Murphy, union president, said: "We are furious that universities have been forced to make such threats because of savage government cuts but we cannot accept that students should provide the missing funds. The maximum student grant next year will be £1,710, so asking students to pay £300 for the right to study would be a considerable at-

tack on their funds."

Vice-chancellors leaving yesterday's meeting were generally relieved that a vote on fees was avoided. They fear it would have divided them and led to splits with students, parents and lecturers. Many agree fees are inevitable if the funding system is not reformed.

Clive Booth, Vice-Chancellor at Oxford Brookes University, said: "If the Government was unable to give us a proper funding system then I think

some universities would have to break away and charge substantial top-up fees just to maintain the quality of what they do. I think that would be very sad because some people would not then be able to go to the university of their choice."

The call for action came as the Liberal Democrats' plans for financing post-school education were leaked in the *Times Educational Supplement* yesterday. Don Foster, Liberal Democrat education

spokesman, will call for long term loans so students can contribute to course fees. The loan would be repaid through the tax or national insurance system.

Vice-chancellors were also privately incensed by John Major's remarks on Tuesday that university funding had risen by 23 per cent in real terms over the past five years. In the same period, student numbers rose by 50 per cent to 1.5 million.



Vice-chancellors discussing their plans yesterday. They dismissed a further review into funding as laughable.

School's common room is in a pub

BY GILLIAN BOWDITCH
SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

A SCOTTISH school has established its sixth-form common room in a pub.

Pupils from Balfour High in Central region are popping into their local, the Pinn Inn, to relax, listen to music and watch television between lessons. The idea came from a member of the school board, a Tory councillor, after overcrowding at the school, a popular comprehensive, meant there was no space for a common room.

Jim Fleming, the school's rector, discussed the matter with parents before approaching the pub's owners. The common room will not be supervised but teachers are adamant that pupils will have no access to alcohol.

Pupils have to sign a pledge promising to abide by school rules, which forbid smoking and drinking, before they can use the room.

Robert Cranston, the pub's landlord, whose daughter Rowan, 17, attends the school, said: "We're very strict about not serving under-age drinkers. There is no question of them sitting in the bar sipping a pint."

Helen Liddell, Labour's Scottish spokeswoman on education, said she had some reservations about the scheme. "It seems somewhat bizarre that with all the concerns there are about drugs and alcohol that the school should choose to do this. I think most parents would be worried about their teenage children being in a licensed premises."

Sandy Kelso, deputy rector at Balfour High, said he knew the people who ran the pub and believed his pupils were trustworthy.

Mother's home at risk over school fees

BY JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

A LEADING independent school is trying to make a single mother sell her home to pay her son's outstanding fees after the break-up of her marriage.

Irene Doherty, a restaurant manageress from Gatley, near Stockport, is being sued for £8,000 in unpaid school and legal fees accumulated since her son Julian was asked to leave Cheadle Hulme School, on the borders of Greater Manchester and Cheshire, four years ago.

A county court judge will decide next month whether Mrs Doherty has to sell the three-bedroom house she has occupied for 19 years to meet a debt which she claims is her former husband's responsibility.

If the action is successful, the family will have to leave the £90,000 house within 28 days.

Mrs Doherty's 15-year marriage to Nader Kohanzad, a stationery manufacturer in Oldham, was over when Julian entered the £3,500-a-year school. By the beginning of 1992 his fees were four terms in arrears and Julian, who is now 18, transferred to a comprehensive school.

Alan Godfrey, Cheadle Hulme's bursar, said the school had no choice but to pursue Mrs Doherty for the debt because she had enrolled her son. "We do not lightly kick someone out of their home but there comes a point when there is no other way to recover the money."

Mrs Doherty said: "Cheadle Hulme are more than prepared to make me and my family homeless. It looks like we are going to be forced onto the streets. We could end up in a hostel."

MI6 advice stops academic's book

BY ROBIN YOUNG

CAMBRIDGE University Press has refused to publish an anthropological study after receiving advice from MI6 that it could provoke terrorist attacks against its staff and university members in Greece.

Two senior members of the CUP's anthropological editorial board have resigned in protest at the decision, claiming that it represents unacceptable academic censorship.

Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood is an ethnographic study of villages in northern Greece by Anastasia Karakasidou, a Greek-born writer. It contradicts the official Greek line that there is no Slavo-Macedonian minority there.

Dr Karakasidou received death and rape threats after publishing a similar study two years ago, claiming that a Slavonic language is spoken in the area and that people consider themselves Macedonian and not Greek. The issue is central to Greece's dispute with the neighbouring republic of Macedonia, part of the

former Yugoslavia. CUP's governing body of senior university academics, the Press Syndicate, decided unanimously not to publish her new book after officials had requested a "terrorist threat assessment" from the British Embassy in Athens and from the CUP's chief salesman in Greece, Craig Walker.

The resulting memorandum prepared by Jessica Kuper, a CUP executive, spoke of a "moral imperative" not to publish, saying it was impossible to discount the embassy's warning that "publication might put at risk the lives of press staff in Athens, and of Cambridge University personnel in Greece".

The two anthropology editorial board members who have resigned are Professor Michael Herzfeld, of Harvard University, and Professor Stephen Coleman, of the University of Minnesota. Professor Herzfeld said the decision to reject the book "represents an unacceptable restriction of academic freedom".

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Stolen items include a silver model of an officer; a picture of Queen Mary in a Fabergé frame; a George II silver chalice; cutlery marked by this George III crest; Chinese figures of pheasants; and a pair of Derby glazed dishes

Kents offer reward for antiques stolen from their home



The Duke and Duchess of Kent will offer a "generous" reward

By OLIVER AUGUST

THE Duke and Duchess of Kent are offering a "substantial" reward for the recovery of antiques stolen from their Oxfordshire home, police said yesterday.

The 22 stolen pieces, mostly silverware and porcelain, are thought to be worth £50,000. "These are items of great historical and sentimental value. Some of

them have family connections. Some are beautiful in their own right," Nicholas Adamson, the Duke and Duchess's private secretary, said, adding that the couple were "upset, as anybody who's been burgled would be".

Among the stolen items is a three-coloured gold Fabergé photograph frame with inset jade stones holding a blurred picture of Queen Mary. The arched frame

was made by the St Petersburg artisan Victor Aranne at the turn of the century.

Other stolen items include a George II silver chalice, a George III dessert knife and a rare pair of Derby glazed sweetmeat dishes.

A collection of six snuff boxes was taken, including a Swiss gold box from around 1840 with the letter "G" engraved below a royal crown and a Geneva box with an

engraving marking the 1807-1814 French occupation of Geneva. The most colourful piece is a pair of Chinese export figures of pheasants on rockwork bases, the plumage in famille rose enamels from the Qianlong period (1736-95).

Thames Valley Police would not disclose the exact sum to be paid out but said the Duke and Duchess would be "generous".

Burglars broke into the couple's

mansion in the hamlet of Crocker End through a window at about 5am on Monday and set off alarms. Police soon arrived but the burglars had escaped with the antiques. The Duke and Duchess were not there at the time.

Caroline Wakeford, of the Art Loss Register, which is co-operating with the police, said the antiques were probably abroad after having been sold to a handler.

PHOTOGRAPH: MAX FORSYTHE

Gas-cooled fridge marks victory for green lobby

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

ONE of Britain's leading fridge makers announced yesterday it was switching its entire production to ozone-friendly chemicals.

Elstar, which supplies pubs and clubs, is believed to be the first maker of commercial fridges in the world to switch to gas-cooled cabinets. It marks a victory in a long-running battle between some of the chemical giants and green groups.

ICI, which with Dupont, is the biggest maker of coolants for fridges, has ridiculed claims by environmentalists that such a fridge could be produced. In 1992, ICI described a fridge based on gases such as propane and isobutane as "pie in the sky", and added: "Can we all go back to the laboratory and spend the next ten years working on Greenpeace ideas to see if they can be made to work in practice?"

But the move by Elstar has vindicated Greenpeace. Yesterday John Gummer, the Environment Secretary and Lord Melchett, executive director of Greenpeace UK, joined the "celebrations" at Elstar's factory in Castle Donington in Leicestershire.

Mr Gummer said: "This sort of development is an

example of the benefits that can be gained by seeking solutions which meet long-term economic, technical and environmental objectives — in a phrase, by developing sustainable technology."

Elstar's decision comes four years after the European Community agreed to ban chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), fridge coolants that have been damaging the ozone layer, under the Montreal Protocol.

Big chemical companies announced they had developed hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs). But these gases also damage the ozone layer or are global-warming gases.

Hydrocarbon refrigeration, as used by Elstar, was developed in the 1930s but ignored. Greenpeace, alerted to the technology, backed an ailing East German fridge company to build ten prototype "Greenfreeze" fridges.

By 1994 many German fridge companies began offering a limited range of such fridges but British industry initially failed to grasp the idea.

A spokesman for ICI said that gas-cooled refrigerants were suitable only for sealed fridge systems and not for domestic fridges.

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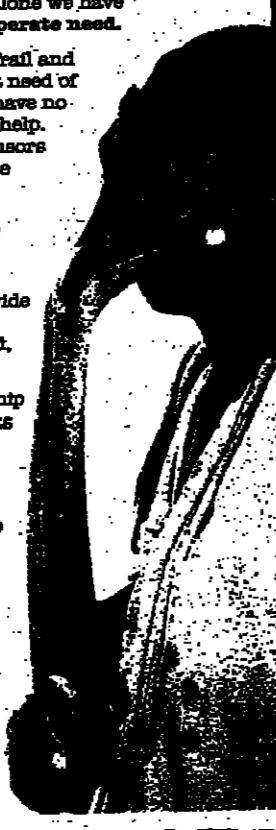
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Doctor had cleared attacker

Ten life terms for misogynist who stabbed shoppers

By A STAFF REPORTER

A RELEASED mental patient who slashed the throats of 15 women in a department store was given 10 life sentences yesterday. Two months before the rampage, David Morgan had visited his GP to complain of renewed "evil thoughts" about attacking women, but a psychiatrist could find no sign of illness.

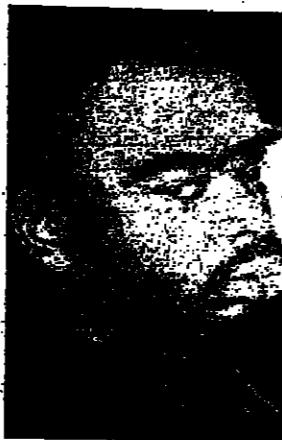
Morgan, 31, took a 12in serrated butcher's boning knife and a kitchen knife into the Rockmans store in Birmingham city centre and made attacks at random in the cosmetics, handbag and jewellery departments, packed with Christmas shoppers in December 1994.

Birmingham Crown Court was told that Morgan had travelled by bus from his home in Aston, pushing and kicking two female shoppers outside the store before entering at 10.15am. Starting in the cosmetics department, he swiped at the neck of an assistant, Debbie Gilbert.

Alistair McCreat, QC, for the prosecution, said another victim, Jan Twining, was browsing in the cards department when he grabbed her shoulder, turned her head, brought the knife across her throat and said: "There's another one".

Two female security officers were injured as they tried to help customers. Morgan was finally halted by Sergeant Jim Lavery and Kevin Hart, a civilian scenes-of-crimes officer, who ordered him to put down his weapon, then rugby-tackled him to the floor.

Mr McCreat said: "Those



Morgan: judge said he may never be freed

who had been cut were in fear for their lives. Others were so frightened that they had lost the power to walk."

The court heard that Morgan had a history of schizophrenia, depression and psychotic disorders after his father's death in 1988. That year, he was admitted to All Saints Psychiatric Hospital, Birmingham, after attacking a female shopworker. He had a conviction for shoplifting.

After two months he was released with directions that he should receive support from the community psychiatric team and continue a course of drugs for three months. That never happened, said Adrian Fulford, QC, for Morgan. "It appears from the records that effectively there was no follow up at all."

In 1992 and 1993, Morgan was conditionally discharged for two incidents when he kicked women in the shins. On September 30, 1994, he told his

GP of his thoughts of attacking women. Three days later a psychiatrist and a nurse assessed Morgan but decided they could find no evidence of mental illness. Mr Fulford said: "If he had been provided with anti-depressants, there is a real chance these offences would not have occurred."

Morgan admitted nine woundings with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, and an attack on a psychiatric nurse with a razor blade at Ashworth High Security Mental Hospital while on remand. Sentencing Morgan, Mr Justice Judge recommended he should not be put forward for parole for 12 years, and told him: "You must be detained until you cease to represent a risk to public safety. If that time never comes, so be it."

A defence application for further reports to see if he could be detained in a psychiatric hospital was refused.



Thomas Galster and Paula Dixon embracing in Hong Kong yesterday nine months after her life was saved

MoD opens former spying base to offers

By JOHN SHAW

THE former American airfield at Alconbury, Cambridgeshire, once home to the U2 spy plane, is to be sold by the Ministry of Defence.

The 1,100-acre site will go on the market in April, a spin-off from the peace dividend. Flying ceased last year when the Americans moved to two bases in Suffolk. They left behind a well-equipped airfield, which now faces a less glorious future as an international freight distribution centre.

Ian Hudson, of Bidwells in Cambridge, the agents who will prepare a marketing campaign, said yesterday that he thought the airfield might fetch between £20 million and

£40 million, possibly to four or five developers. It is at the junction of the East Midlands and East Anglia, two of the fastest growing regions in Britain, at the eastern end of the rapidly developing M1 link, and has a direct road route to Felixstowe, the biggest container port in Britain.

RAF Alconbury was established in 1938 and was a bomber base during the Second World War. The Americans took over in 1942 and the present sprawling complex includes nuclear-resistant hangars and bunkers. The USAF used it as a home for high-flying U2 reconnaissance flights over Eastern Europe.

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**Wedding
for tourist
saved by
inflight op**

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

A WOMAN whose life was saved by emergency surgery 35,000ft up on a flight from Hong Kong was married in the colony yesterday.

Two surgeons who were travelling on the British Airways jumbo last May set up a makeshift operating theatre. Using a coat hanger, a plastic mineral water bottle, sticky tape, a catheter tube and cognac to sterilise the implements, Professor Angus Wallace, who is based in Nottingham, and Dr Tom Wong, based in Dundee, repaired Paula Dixon's collapsed lung.

Yesterday Mrs Dixon, 39, who is from Newcastle upon Tyne and is divorced with three children, married Thomas Galster, 31, a German who manages a factory in Hong Kong, nine months after they first met.

They were in a motorcycle crash last May as they drove to the airport. Mrs Dixon walked away from the accident, thinking she had only bruised her arm.

Widow's defeat in battle for Bart's

By IAN MURRAY

THE last legal battle to save Britain's oldest hospital was lost yesterday when the High Court ruled that the decision to shut it was lawful.

A judge dismissed a challenge by an 81-year-old widow, who had claimed that the consultation process leading up to the decision to close St Bartholomew's Hospital, near Smithfield Market in London, was fatally flawed and thus illegal.

She had applied for a judicial review of the closure decision made by the local health authority and Virginia Bottomley, who was Health Secretary at the time.

Mr Justice Latham ruled that the consultation was properly conducted and that the decision to close Bart's and transfer its work to the Royal London Hospital at Whitechapel, also in east London, was "the most advantageous option in financial terms".

He added: "If the decision stands, it spells the end of a great teaching hospital which has served the City of London for over 800 years."

Monica Willan, who lives in sheltered housing on the Peabody Estate round the corner from the hospital, admitted after the judgment that she would now have to give up her personal fight to save Bart's.

"The battle may be lost but the war isn't over," she said. "I think I have got to the end of my usefulness and I'm too bloody old to carry on. But I am sure lots of others will take up the cause."

She said she could no longer walk round the corner to get treatment for her arthritis but had not so far travelled to the Royal London, for help. "The very idea of going all that way makes me feel rather ill."

In his 15-page ruling, the judge said the "controversial report" recommending closure had been opposed by 98.6 per cent of those consulted. However, the East London and City Health Authority had concluded that the health of people in its area could best be improved by concentrating all services on one site.

Losing candidate pledges: 'We are going to be a serious national party'

By-election failure forces Scargill into hasty relaunch

By JAMES LANDALE

ARTHUR SCARGILL will renew his campaign to gather support for the breakaway Socialist Labour Party next week despite a poor showing at the Hemsworth by-election.

The miners' leader and other SLP members are to hold public meetings across the country to boost membership ahead of the party's formal launch on May 1. Members will also be invited to a conference in London in early March to devise a manifesto.

Yesterday a defiant Brenda Nixon, the SLP candidate who narrowly avoided losing her deposit after receiving 1,193 votes, said it had been a "brilliant" result. "It was a vote of no confidence in the new Labour party," she said. "They said we would come last, they said we would lose our deposit, but we proved them wrong on both counts."

Labour's candidate, Jon Trickett, won easily with 15,817 votes, more than 70 per cent of the vote, reducing the Government's Commons majority to South East by-election.



Trickett: won with more than 70 per cent of the vote

A serious party and we are going to be a national party." She said the party had not yet decided whether to contest the forthcoming Staffordshire South East by-election.

The Conservatives yesterday claimed the result fell far short of a ringing endorsement of Labour. Dr Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, said the low turnout — about 40 per cent — showed

Labour was failing to impress voters. "I think that lack of enthusiasm for Labour is probably the single most important thing that came out of it," he told BBC Radio 4.

Tony Blair said the victory was an indication of the appeal of new Labour. "It's the highest percentage of the vote that we've got in this Parliament and I think it shows not merely the disillusionment with the Conservatives, but also the strength and appeal of new Labour."

John Prescott said the miners in the West Yorkshire constituency had given Mr Scargill "a substantial thumbs down" despite his promise to reopen pits.

Result: Jon Trickett (Lab) 15,817; Norman Hazel (Con) 1,942; David Ridgway (Lib Dem) 1,516; Brenda Nixon (SLP) 1,193; Lord David Sutch (Monster Raving Loony) 652; Peter Davies (UK Independence) 455; Peggy Alexander (Green) 157; Mark Thomas (Mark Thomas Fri Nights Channel 4) 122; Michael Cooper (National Democrat) 11; Dianne Leighton (Natural Law) 28. Labour majority 13,875. Turnout 39.46 per cent. Swing 5.43 per cent Conservative to Labour.

Anthony Howard, page 20



Arthur Scargill gives Brenda Nixon a consolatory kiss after she lost at Hemsworth

Militants blamed as Liverpool chief quits

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE Labour council leader who was instrumental in riding Liverpool of its "loony left" image resigned yesterday amid claims that hardliners were trying to regain power in the city.

Harry Rimmer, 68, stood down after party officials in his Dovecot ward left him off a shortlist of candidates for city council elections. Labour councillors said they would try to persuade Mr Rimmer, a moderate who took over the leadership in 1990, to reconsider his decision. But opposition politicians said that his "desecration" heralded a return to the militant socialism that flourished under Derek Hatton.

Michael Storey, leader of the Liberal Democrats, said: "Clearly his policies have not been regarded with affection by the members in the Left of the group and as a result he has been ditched. He has been knifed in the back by a growing number of strong leftwingers."

Mr Rimmer, who declined to comment yesterday, was handing the freedom of Liverpool to the city's two premier league football clubs when the ward officials made their decision. Labour has a majority of one on the council.

Isaac Shephard, the Labour chairman of Dovecot ward, would not comment on the motives behind the decision to drop Mr Rimmer after ten years of service. "It is not my responsibility to explain why people did not vote for him," he said. "I have no idea why they voted the way they did. There was no discussion about it."

Frank Prendergast, the deputy leader who will replace Mr Rimmer, said: "Following the political problems of the 1980s, it was the courage, vision and determination of Harry Rimmer that led the city in the direction of recovery and renewal. He pioneered a new spirit of partnership with government agencies, businesses, the churches and community leaders."

Bill to curb sex tourism wins cross-party support

By JAMES LANDALE

CLANDESTINE travel agents who organise holidays abroad for paedophiles seeking sex with child prostitutes are to face prosecution after a Bill to combat sex tourism won cross-party support in the Commons yesterday.

The Sexual Offences (Conspiracy and Incitement) Bill, making it illegal for someone in the United Kingdom to incite another to commit sexual offences against children abroad.

received an unopposed second reading and is likely to become law. John Marshall, Conservative MP for Hendon South, who put forward the Bill, said: "I believe this House has no take action to make it more difficult for paedophiles and child molesters to travel abroad to ply their perversions. I don't think one can find words sufficient to describe the contempt all of us feel for the disgusting and degrading behaviour that some individuals take part in."

Some MPs want tougher action

taken so that sex tourists can be prosecuted here for sexual offences committed abroad. Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, announced on Thursday a review of the law to see if British courts could extend their jurisdiction to sexual offences committed by UK nationals overseas.

Although Tom Sackville, the Home Office Minister, welcomed the Bill yesterday, he cautioned against extending British legal jurisdiction. He doubted whether British courts would have enough good evidence to

ensure successful prosecutions. "This problem can only be solved in the countries concerned by those governments deciding they don't want these activities to take place in their jurisdiction," he told MPs.

"There are doubts as to whether extra-territorial jurisdiction would be likely to be of assistance in bringing to justice British nationals who commit offences against children in other countries. We therefore feel,

subject to the review that is taking place, that our efforts should be concentrated on assisting foreign authorities as much as possible."

Alan Michael, Labour's home affairs spokesman, was disappointed with the Government's response.

"The Bill was a 'small step in the right direction', but the Government's review was 'not exactly a tough or vigorous promise of action', he said.

Donald Anderson, Labour MP for Swansea East and a co-sponsor of the Bill, said that it would not prevent the activities of those on independent sex tours.

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Campaigners say system of labelling hand-woven carpets to reassure buyers does not work

Drive to ban child labour makes India poor poorer

A DRIVE by British charities against importing Indian hand-knotted carpets made by children has divided social activists in both countries. World sales of rugs from India, Nepal and Pakistan have fallen because of concern about child exploitation, throwing poor families deeper into poverty.

The introduction of a registered label, Rugmark, on exported Indian carpets, supposedly reassuring buyers that child weavers did not make them, was condemned this week as a "fraud and a racket" by Swami Agnivish, one of India's most respected social activists. The scheme is promoted in Britain by Christian Aid and the London-based Anti-Slavery International.

Rugmark has been boycotted by E. Hill and Co, the main exporter of Indian carpets to Britain, partly explaining why no Indian rugs for sale in British stores carry the label. Britain is the third largest importer of Indian rugs after Germany and the United



Moves by British charities to outlaw child weavers in South Asia have split activists.
Christopher Thomas writes

States. Almost all carpets made in South Asia contain an element of child labour.

The labelling scheme, controlled by a Delhi-based non-profit company, Rugmark Foundation, requires carpet exporters and manufacturers to pledge that their products are not made by children under 14. About 50 Indian companies have signed up with the scheme, representing a small proportion of total carpet exports.

However, it is all but impossible to verify their pledge. Carpet weaving is a cottage industry carried out in thousands of mud huts over a wide area in north Indian villages, where child labour is commonplace and socially acceptable. Rugs are woven

primarily by peasants and their families working part-time on their small looms, usually located in poorly lit and badly ventilated huts. Weavers frequently suffer from eye and respiratory problems.

Some child weavers are migrant labourers, mainly from the poor northern state of Bihar, a number of whom are sold into bondage to pay off parents' debts. This amounts to slavery. Most looms in northern India are owned by subsistence farmers whose families weave part-time for extra income.

Swami Agnivish, head of the Bonded Labour Liberation Front, said consumers were being duped into believing that carpets carrying the

Rugmark logo were free of child labour. "It is impossible to give such a guarantee, because carpet weaving is contracted out, sub-contracted and then sub-sub-contracted, until you do not know who is making what for whom." He advocates a process of change rather than sweeping measures that could shatter the industry and increase poverty.

The Rugmark Foundation, set up with German government money, seeks payments from importers and exporters of carpets bearing its logo of a smiling face on a rug. Kailash Satyarthi, head of the South Asian Coalition on Child Survival and a driving force behind the scheme, said the foundation would eventually provide schooling and rehabilitation for child weavers.

The Rugmark scheme is opposed by Project Mala, a registered charity run by Robin Garland, a York-based businessman. It operates four schools for 700 children aged ten to 14 in Uttar Pradesh, the centre of carpet manufacture



Child carpet weavers in northern India. Many have been sold into bondage to pay for their parents' debts.

in India, providing basic literacy and employable skills to child weavers.

"In an ideal world there should be no child weavers," Mr Garland said during a visit to India. "But chasing

them off the looms takes away income from poor families and does not give children back their childhood. They are simply driven into even more hazardous employment." Oxfam, which sells Indian car-

petes, takes extraordinary steps to ensure that rugs advertised in its catalogues are free of child labour. This is one of the few examples of careful monitoring.

Kevan Bundell, programme

officer of Christian Aid's South Asia team, said in London: "The Rugmark system is not foolproof. It was launched earlier than would have been ideal because of German pressure."

Rural school defies end of apartheid

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN POTGRIETERSRUS, SOUTH AFRICA

THE burly, balding Afrikaner deputy of the primary school embroiled in a national race row shifted awkwardly and glanced nervously across his small office. "The parents are saying they don't want kaffirs coming to their school," he said wearily. "They think blacks are inferior."

In bright sunshine outside, fair-skinned boys with cricket bats played beneath tropical trees, seemingly unaware of the furore going on around them. Last week, their parents slipped into military-style khaki uniforms and physically harried three black children from the school.

Ngokwako Ramathlodi, the African National Congress premier of Northern Province, has ordered the school to open its doors to the blacks or face legal action that could lead to its closure. But at a meeting on Thursday the parents agreed to stand firm.

The case will now go to the Pretoria Supreme Court on Monday, the first such test.

A year after formerly whites-only schools were integrated under a single educational structure, many schools in rural areas still preserve their racial exclusivity. Claims by these schools that this is because blacks have not applied are contested and the ANC is becoming impatient.

Apartheid was always more rigidly entrenched in rural towns than cities and is proving harder to shake off. In Potgietersrus, 160 miles north of Johannesburg, many whites are resentful about attempts to enrol blacks in schools which they say were built and maintained with their money.

The two apartheid-era national flags hanging in the main hall at the primary school are reminders of how many whites still cling to the past. In language echoing the dark days of discrimination, one parent told a newspaper this week that the Bible warned about racial mixing and said "under no circumstances" would her children mix with blacks.

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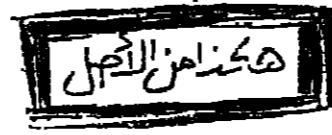
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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 3 1996

ANDRÉ CAMARA

Hanson's electricity shops axe 2,300 jobs

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

DOUBTS hang over the future of Powerhouse, the electrical retailer owned by Hanson, after the announcement yesterday of a huge redundancy programme that will hit 2,300 staff and close 195 high street stores.

Although 120 stores will remain trading in the chain that Hanson bought fully in November, after having inherited a 36 per cent stake from its takeover of Eastern Group last year, electricity company analysts believe that Powerhouse has no long-term future.

The chain, which has been losing £25 million a year, shows a similar trading pattern to other electrical appliance outlets run by electricity companies. When ownership of Powerhouse was shifted to Hanson, the co-owners incurred a charge of £140 million.

The chain was bought by Hanson, for what was believed to be a nominal sum, from its co-owners, Midlands Electricity and Southern Electric, when the two companies were both the subject of active bids from the generators PowerGen and National Power. Other electricity companies have left electrical retailing, and the operation has been heavily criticised by high street retailers, such as Dixons, which claim that the activities are loss-making and take advantage of monopoly income from electricity distribution to support a high street presence.

Nigel Hawkins, utilities analyst with Yamaichi, said:

"There is no money in high street retailing for electricity companies. Such outlets are creatures of the Seventies and Sixties." Many analysts believe that the retailing fronts will disappear around the country, with companies abandoning what was largely

the public face of the former electricity boards.

In a submission to Ofgem, the electricity regulator, in 1992, Dixons argued that, when the cost of financing the capital tied up in the retail business is taken into account, a net aggregate loss was made by one electricity company that had reported an operating profit in appliance retailing.

Recently, in an energy magazine by Oxford Economic Research Associates, John Clare, the chief executive of Dixons, complained that the consumer electrical industry could not support competition that was uncommercial.

When Hanson bought Powerhouse, it said that it would implement a thorough review of the business, but emphasised that it would retain payment points for customers. Yesterday, Eastern Group detailed 300 new meter changing points at a range of new outlets, including post offices and petrol stations. The fact that more changing points than store closures have been announced may cast doubt on the future of remaining Powerhouse stores. There is a belief in the City that those stores will be packaged and sold soon.

Chris Collins, Hanson vice-chairman, said that the future of the remaining stores had been made more secure by the closure programme, but declined to say what the next step would be. "We have secured a future for the remaining stores and that is an achievement on a heavily loss-making business," he said.

Glyn Moser, head of Powerhouse Retail, blamed a highly competitive electrical retailing market for the closures. He said: "This loss-making scenario cannot continue, and the plan offers our remaining staff a secure and positive future."



BLAGG, the loss-making building supplies merchant, announced yesterday the £30 million acquisition of Freepages, the telephone directory company (Alasdair Murray writes).

The reverse takeover will see the directors of Freepages taking a 54.5 per cent stake in Blagg and the company renaming itself Freepages plc. Existing Blagg shareholders will receive

shares in the reconstituted company on the basis of two old shares for one new share. Shares in Blagg were suspended at 17.5p pending the relisting by February 27.

Pictured are the incoming executives Ronald Zimet, chairman, centre, Nigel Robertson, chief executive, right, and Robert Bonnier, finance director.

BA shift on flights creates 1,000 jobs

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT
AIR CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH AIRWAYS is to create 1,000 jobs as part of a plan to switch flights from overcrowded Heathrow to Gatwick airport. Eleven weekly Central and East African services will move to Gatwick on March 18.

By the summer BA will fly to as many short-haul destinations from Gatwick as from Heathrow, and within three years it will be handling as many passengers at Gatwick's North terminal as now use Heathrow Terminal 4.

Heathrow services are also continuing to expand so there will be no compensating loss of jobs there. "The people who now operate the Africa services from Heathrow will simply switch to others," a spokeswoman said. New routes into North America are being opened up, as well as services to Edinburgh, Stockholm and Zurich.

The expansion at Gatwick is taking place at a quicker rate than BA envisaged six months ago. It had expected to take on an additional 400 crew.

The airline is stepping up its recruitment drive, including 70 qualified pilots who will be taken on at Gatwick by the summer. The first 16 cadet pilots have started a 56-week training course at Oxford, and others will be trained at Bedford or in Australia.

At the same time 160 direct-entry pilots will be recruited by May 1997 and a further 100 a year will be given refresher training at Prestwick. The BA group already employs 6,877 staff in the Gatwick area.

In 1992, when British Airways took over Dan Air, it operated 380 scheduled flights a week from Gatwick. This summer that number will have risen to 900 a week to 90 destinations.

Sir Colin Marshall, BA's chairman, said yesterday: "We have chosen to grow at Gatwick because the airport already boasts first-class rail and road links and an extensive route network. Transferring East and Central African services to Gatwick will allow us to expand our business at Heathrow on routes where demand is greatest."

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BUSINESS TODAY

Shares at new high on futures buying

BY MICHAEL CLARK STOCK MARKET CORRESPONDENT

SHARE prices yesterday closed at yet another new high after a burst of futures-related buying.

The FT-SE 100 index recovered from a hesitant start to end just a shade below its best of the day with a rise of 28.5, to a record 3,781.3. It stretched the rise on the week to 46.6 points, with a total £30 million shares changing hands. By contrast, government securities had falls of more than 5% at the longer end in volatile trading, which dealers said reflected weaker overseas bond markets.

Early impetus for the rise in

Mattel drops \$5.2bn offer for Hasbro

BY ERIC REGULY

MATTTEL, the maker of Barbie dolls, yesterday abandoned its \$5.2 billion offer for Hasbro after accusing the rival American toymaker of launching a "scorched earth campaign" to remain independent.

Alan Hassenfeld, chief executive of Hasbro, which is best known for its GI Joe soldier dolls and Tonka toys, said: "I am firmly convinced that our board did the right thing in unanimously rejecting their unsolicited proposal because of the very serious antitrust issues raised by it and the

resulting very low probability that the transaction could be completed."

Mattel said the strong rejection was peculiar because it had been led to believe that Hasbro was keen on a merger.

The two companies had been in talks since last April and, according to Mattel, had outlined a basic agreement in January. Mattel even offered to pay Hasbro a \$100 million break-up fee if antitrust law prevented the merger from proceeding. Mattel's share swap offer represented a premium of \$2.2 billion.

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Still room at the Savoy

BY JON ASHWORTH

THE future ownership of the Savoy "group" of hotels remains up in the air, despite reports of a "done deal" with Prince al-Waleed bin Talal, the billionaire Saudi investor. A handful of bidders have expressed an interest in the group, which includes Claridges and the Berkeley in London, but a serious contender has yet to emerge. The Sultan of Brunei, who owns the Dorchester, and his younger brother, Prince Jefri Bolkiah, who owns Asprey, the royal jeweller, are among names to be linked with the Savoy, which faces a new chapter after Grainger's victory over Forte. A purchas-

er would inherit 68 per cent of the Savoy equity but only 42 per cent of the voting shares—an arrangement which thwarted Lord Forte in his long-running struggle for ownership of the Savoy.

A deal with the Savoy would make sense for Prince al-Waleed, who is rapidly emerging as one of the world's most dynamic investors. He holds significant stakes in Euro Disney and Citicorp, and is part of the consortium which recently took control of Canary Wharf, the office development in London's Docklands.

His advisers believe an investment in the Savoy is

worthy of serious consideration. He is reported to be eyeing other "prestige" hotels such as the Hyde Park and the Waldorf.

Possible contenders include Kwek Leng Beng, the Singapore-based property tycoon, who last year purchased the Copthorne chain of hotels from Aer Lingus for £210 million. His other UK interests include the Chelsea hotel in Knightsbridge.

The fate of the Savoy rests with family trusts associated with the late Sir Hugh Wontner. They hold the key to any sale, and have left matters in the hands of the Savoy board.

Still room at the Savoy

BY JON ASHWORTH

The Sultan of Brunei is interested

Bundesbank stands firm on EMU criteria

FROM ANATOLE KALETSKY IN DAVOS

HANS TIETMEYER, the President of the Bundesbank, cast further doubt on the credibility of the European single currency yesterday when he said there was "no chance" of softening the Maastricht criteria for monetary union and revised the German Government's demand for a tough "stability pact" to force European countries to intensify their fiscal discipline after 1999.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos in Switzerland, Herr Tietmeyer refused to speculate about which countries, if any, would be ready to join a monetary union by the 1999 deadline. It was not

possible to predict the outcome of the review of the Maastricht targets in the spring of 1998. In response to a question about whether he thought a monetary union would actually go ahead on schedule, he answered: "1999, that is the date in the treaty ... that is the only date that counts."

The Bundesbank President added that even if the convergence criteria were satisfied, Germany would insist on a further tough political condition before there could be any question of monetary union. Prospective members of EMU would have to agree on a system of fines for exceeding future deficit targets far tougher than the vague procedure outlined in the Maastricht Treaty.

This proposal for a tough stability pact, involving potentially enormous fines, was first made last summer by Theo Waigel, Germany's Finance Minister. But as doubts have spread about EMU, amid indications that neither France nor Germany will be able to hit the Maastricht targets, the demand for a stability pact seemed to recede. Yesterday's statement by Herr Tietmeyer suggested, however, that the Bundesbank's attitude to the issue had, if anything, toughened.

Other governments and the European Commission have said that they accept the principle of a stability pact, but that any such pact should be based on the complex "excessive deficits" procedure laid down in the Maastricht Treaty.

Herr Tietmeyer said he was now waiting for the Commission to come up with a "concrete proposal", adding that support for an idea "in principle" could sometimes be a substitute for putting it into practice.

Without strict observance of the Maastricht targets and tough automatic fines embodied in a stability pact, Herr Tietmeyer said it would be impossible to persuade the German public that the new single currency would be as strong as the mark. The Bundesbank could only support a new European currency that was as stable as the mark. Jean-Claude Trichet, Governor of the Bank of France, said he was confident that EMU would go ahead in 1999 and that both Germany and France would hit the Maastricht targets.

Yarrow cuts 650 jobs as MoD holds fire on bids

BY PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

YARROW, the warship-builder on the Clyde, cut more than 600 jobs yesterday and said that further jobs will go unless the Government places orders with the yard for new Royal Navy frigates.

While ministers plan a decision shortly on where to build three Type 23 frigates — with Yarrow seen as favourite — Whitehall emphasised last night that the company maintained there was a need for job cuts regardless of whether it secured the new order.

Yarrow announced the long-feared job losses at the yard, claiming that the 650 redundancies among the yard's workforce of 3,000 were "unavoidable" in the absence of sufficient work to follow on from current contracts, which includes three other Type 23s for the Royal Navy, and two frigates for the Royal Malaysian Navy. Only one Type 23 remains to be launched, with the others now undergoing final commissioning ahead of delivery later in the year.

Sainsbury fuels price war fear

SUPERMARKET shares came under pressure yesterday as Sainsbury prepared to launch its second major price-cutting promotion of the year, reviving concern about a price war, and stockbrokers cut profit forecasts for the sector (Sarah Cunningham writes).

Sainsbury's February Bonus campaign, starting tomorrow, is a continuation of the January Savers promotion, which it has hailed as a great success, and involves price cuts averaging 25 per cent on 200 items. Sainsbury shares closed unchanged at 380p after recovering from early losses, but Tesco shares closed down 5p, at 287p, and Asda slipped 1.5p, to 104p.

Rival supermarkets yesterday dismissed Sainsbury's move as a gimmick, but analysts say they may yet follow suit.

New alert hits shares in Dawson

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

SHARES in Dawson, the textile group, yesterday fell 14p to close at 97p as the company issued its third profit warning in 12 months.

Dawson said that profits would be well below current market forecasts, blaming tough trading conditions in the UK and overstocking in the US for depressing sales volumes and margins in the fibres and yarns and apparel businesses. It added that the market in fur fabrics had also weakened, it said.

Last year Dawson made a full-year profit of £1.7 million. At the half-year, the company saw a 43 per cent drop in profits, to £9 million, and gave warning of a difficult second half.

The company, which is best known for its Pringle and Ballantyne labels, has suffered from cancellation of an £8.75 million sale of five US apparel businesses. Dawson said that it is seeking another buyer, but that year-end gearing would be higher than expected.

Derek Finlay, chairman, insisted, however, that Dawson would maintain its 1.5p dividend. He said: "Substantial progress continues to be made in improving operating efficiencies in the group's key businesses, including Pringle. I remain confident that the group is on the right track towards recovery."

Tempus, page 28



Finlay: confident that Dawson is on the road to recovery

BT attacks price controls

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

BT HAS stepped up its campaign for deregulation by calling for an end to virtually all price controls by the year 2000.

The continuing battle with Don Cruickshank, the industry regulator, saw the company also call for a right of reply in disputes with Ofel, with the ability to go to the Monopolies and Mergers

Commission if it does not agree with a decision by Ofel.

BT maintains that competition in telecoms would be sufficient to ensure pricing benefits to customers. It said that liberalisation of the industry across Europe in 1998 and swift developments in technology could speed deregulation so that by 2000 there would be no need for pricing controls, except for those covering access to the system.

Proposals on pricing and fair trading put forward by the regulator last year will be crucial for BT's investment plans. The company and the regulator are at odds on a rate of return. Ofel believes the range should be 9-13 per cent, while BT says it should be 16-18 per cent.

"How very sad that would be. We must not let it happen."

Later this year, the council will launch a new drive to win support for the industry. Dr Alan Rudge, deputy group managing director of BT and chairman of the new council's senate, said the changes marked the "beginning of a new era for the engineering profession", and gave it and engineers a new mandate for the future.

Heseltine lauds engineering's key role

BY PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

ENGINEERING in Britain is "absolutely central" to the UK economy and its prospects of meeting the global markets and technological challenges of the 21st century, Michael Heseltine, Deputy Prime Minister, said yesterday.

Mr Heseltine was speaking to industry leaders in London at the launch of the new

Engineering Council, which, for the first time, brings together under a new, merged identity the 39 institutions and professional bodies in the engineering industry. The conference was relayed live to parallel events around the country.

Mr Heseltine said that engineering was "crucial for the present and future well-being of the national economy", though he warned that its "full

potential is not being realised in certain key respects". It needed to promote a "fundamental reform" of the selection, education, training and use of engineers and technicians, he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister welcomed the formation of the new council, and said that the Government would continue to support it and the industry. But Sir Alastair Morton, co-chairman of Eurotunnel, the

THE SUNDAY TIMES

"I have never been a monument man. I have always been a little embarrassed at having my name on the door. I have never looked at the company as an ego trip . . ."

Lord Hanson

— Business, The Sunday Times tomorrow.

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RE-EMERGING 37

Investors begin to look East once again

WEEKEND
MONEY

TESSA TIME

The second
Weekend Money
special guide



Alliance chief urges patience over flotation

Anne Ashworth says investors must wait to see how they will benefit from the free shares

Patience is a quality that will now be required from each of the three million members of the Alliance & Leicester Building Society. Although they are all eager to know how much they will receive when the society floats on the stock market in mid-1997, their curiosity must remain until the flotation and its conversion to a bank.

Peter White, the society's chief executive, has pledged that he will not disclose the exact terms of the free share distribution until the deal has been approved by the Building Societies Commission.

This means that savers and borrowers cannot discover whether the society plans a Halifax-style deal, involving a basic distribution to all members, plus an extra variable distribution for some savers with more than £1,000 invested. Though it has been suggested the society could have, in mind a basic distribution only, giving all qualifying borrowers and savers the same amount of shares, Mr White would not comment on this, or any permutation.

He explains that he does not wish to raise false hopes among customers, citing the discontent that arose among Cheltenham & Gloucester members after a High Court ruling which disqualified

384,000 borrowers and 100,000 savers from the £1.8 billion payout.

In spite of Mr White's vow of silence, a few small details have been made available. Only borrowers and share account holders who were on the Alliance & Leicester books at December 31, 1995, will be entitled to free shares. They must remain with the society until the flotation and its conversion to a bank.

In a significant concession, setting the Alliance & Leicester apart from other flotations, those share account holders who had balances of less than £100 at December 31, 1995, will be allowed to replenish their accounts up to the £100 limit, so qualifying for a vote and free shares. They must put the money into the account 56 days before the voting date.

The society says that, so long as they act by the summer, they should be ensured of their share of the windfall. If somehow they fail to do so (an expensive mistake), they will be entitled to the statutory cash bonus which will also be on offer to children.

The booklet now being sent to all Alliance & Leicester members sets out no fewer than 45 main share accounts, including the Bonus 90, Bonus 180, Instant Access, Keysaver, Midas and Tessa. The society points out that certain old

share accounts dating back to the days before the merger of the Alliance with the Leicester in 1985 do not appear on the list but still qualify for free shares. In the past, the Alliance & Leicester was famed for the speed in which it launched and then withdrew accounts confusing many customers.

Like depositors with the Halifax and the Woolwich, the million or more Alliance & Leicester customers who have only a deposit-type account and are not borrowers are not eligible to vote and will not qualify for the free shares or a cash payment.

Alliance & Leicester deposit accounts (another lengthy list) include the Prime Deposit, Keyway and the Alliance & Leicester Giro Current Accounts.

This last piece of news will come as a blow to the 1.3 million holders of these accounts and the other Girobank customers who may have presumed themselves to have a relationship with the society.

Aware of the controversy, Mr White and his fellow executives say one aim of the flotation is to give equal status to all the group's customers, members and non-members. But this is unlikely to pacify the Girobank customers.

Alliance & Leicester members information office 0345 221144

More homes will go as aid cuts bite

Lenders are using recent government cuts in state support for borrowers as a lever to speed the process of repossessing the homes of people already struggling to make mortgage payments, it emerged this week.

Housing advisers say more people will have their homes repossessed more quickly as the new regime starts to bite. The evidence is bearing out their fears of last year when the extent of the cuts became clear.

The Council of Mortgage Lenders says the number of households repossessed last year was higher than it might have been without income support cuts. It published figures this week showing 49,210 homes were repossessed last year, against 49,210 in 1994.

The National Council of Citizens' Advice Bureaux (Nacab) says its advisers are

finding borrowers excluded from income support for mortgage payments under the new rules are coming under increasing pressure from lenders. Liz Phelps, Nacab's social policy officer, said: "There is no clear pattern but we are seeing evidence with existing borrowers already in trouble that if income support is not being paid, this is the

Time to talk page 33

last straw. We are also seeing cases where borrowers cannot pay anything for eight weeks [before they qualify for income support] and lenders are threatening repossession".

Phil Harris, adviser at the Colchester Mortgage Arrears Forum, said: "The first stage is those who are in the [arrears] pipeline now who

are not able to maintain their mortgage payments. There will be a breakdown in cases where lenders are in long term negotiation because there cannot be any certainty among lenders that the mortgage will be paid." He added: "There will be a second stage where people with minor arrears become dependent on benefits long term and they don't qualify for income support. We are beginning to get the situation we anticipated".

Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, introduced cuts to income support for mortgage payments last October. They had a dual purpose: to cut the £1 billion annual bill for income support on mortgage payments and to persuade more people to take out private insurance, as part of the Conservative privatisation of the welfare state. Anyone tak-

ing out a new mortgage or remortgaging after October 1 1995 then losing their job or falling ill must wait nine months before getting state help with their mortgage. Those who already had loans before October 1 last year but claim after that date will get nothing for two months and only 50 per cent of their interest paid for the next four months. Income support for mortgage interest is now calculated at a standard rate of 8 per cent, rather than the actual rate borrowers are charged by lenders.

Housing advisers say the changes make it almost impossible for ill or out of work borrowers without savings to avoid getting into arrears before income support payments start.

SARA MCCONNELL

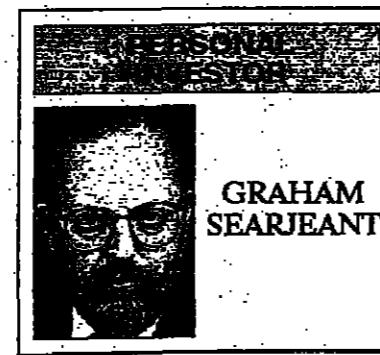
Veteran message for savers

Each year, at about this time, Barclays de Zoete Wedd delivers a simple, powerful message to City investors. It is nearly always the same and applies to private investors too. Over the long term, you would have earned better returns from investing in company shares than in any other common financial asset such as building society deposits, gilt-edged or index-linked bonds. Unless you think something fundamental has changed, shares are likely to build up your long-term savings better in the future too.

The message is powerful because de Zoete, broker forerunner of BZW, started this annual report on past returns in 1956 and has taken many of the calculations back to 1918. If a tax-free fund invested £100 in equities in 1918 and re-invested all the dividends, it should now have an investment worth £67,000. In gilt-edged, the money would be worth £8,300 and if kept in cash (placed safely in the money markets) just £3,700.

The bulk of these increases are eaten up by inflation. Taking that out, equities still averaged an annual real rate of return of 7.8 per cent, gilt-edged 1.9 per cent and cash 1.5 per cent. Figures differ for other long periods but the comparison holds. When inflation was high, gilt-edged and cash failed to maintain their real value even with income rolled up.

Most private investors pay income tax. Even the return on equities derives mostly from their dividends, but allowing for income tax only brings down the returns. It does not alter the pattern. Since 1960, equities returned an annual



GRAHAM
SEAREANT

4.5 per cent in real terms with income rolled up after basic-rate income tax. That is a lot better than gilt-edged produced without deducting tax. A building society deposit with interest paid net produced minus 1.7 per cent.

No wonder marketing rivals and humble salesmen alike are prone to borrow BZW's charts and tables to plug any equity-based product. Why should any one invest in anything else?

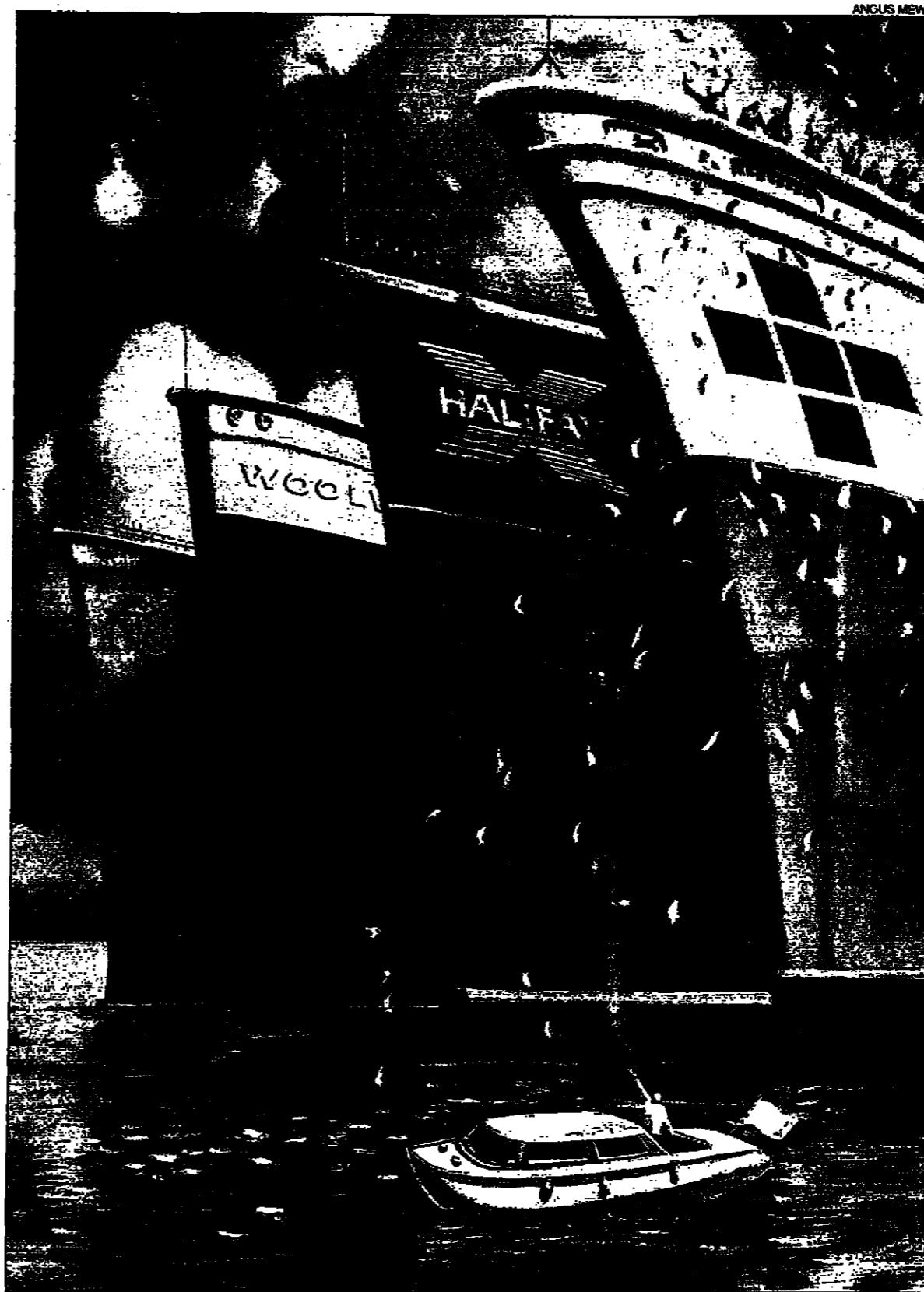
There are two reasons. Most investors are not trying to build the biggest possible capital fund over 25 years, let alone 77. The calculations are nothing like so simple if you need to get the best sustainable income in retirement, to keep money aside for an emergency or want to save over five years to buy a new car or put down a deposit on a house — for most recent decades a better home than any financial investment.

You do not get something for nothing in investment. There is a price to pay for equities' better performance: higher

risk. Any standard-rate taxpayer freakishly unlucky enough to put their all into shares at the 1968 peak and sell at the end-1974 trough would have been left with £27 of purchasing power for every £100 invested. The inflation-ridden 1970s were bad for most investments, but over those six years it would have been far better to keep the money in a building society. Indeed, capital put into shares when they went too high in 1968 did not regain its buying power until 1993. Today, share prices look slightly above their long-term trend.

BZW points out, however, that investors have been paid handsomely for that risk. The more of the performance you can capture, and the more of the risk you can lay off, the more attractive shares become to build savings. The figures assume you spread the risk over many shares. The risk also falls the longer your time horizon. It probably outweighs the advantages over one year, rarely over 25. You avoid the 1968 trap if you invest a little each month, quarter or year. Investing a lump sum at one go is riskier. Sellers of unit-trust savings plans have also long trumpeted the useful quirk of "pound cost averaging". Your money buys more shares when prices are below trend than when they are toppy. To capture gains, avoid high charges, which plagued personal pensions, plough income back and use tax-free vehicles.

Regular savings using a low-cost personal equity plan or pension plan to invest in unit trusts still look hard to beat — if you are truly patient.



Woolwich woes are mounting

The rising tide of frustration with the Woolwich continues this week with more complaints from readers about their treatment under the terms of the flotation. Some are angry at the length of time to the float that is not scheduled to take place until the end of 1997, while one reader, Lord Coleraine, a solicitor, who challenged the Abbey National during its flotation over the qualification of children for shares, questions the Woolwich's logic in making December 31 the cut-off date.

When announcing the society's plans, Peter Robinson, Woolwich managing director, accused the 30,000 people who had opened accounts in the three days prior to the announcement as "carpabaggers".

Lord Coleraine cannot understand why these people should be penalised, whereas those who opened their accounts in December are not.

In a letter to the society he said: "You will understand as well as I do that the investors who joined your society in the first days of this year are no more carpabaggers than those who joined in December, acting possibly on inside information, but certainly with a more sophisticated knowledge of the effect of section 5 and schedule 2 of the Building Societies Act 1986, than the man in the street, whom your managing director so roundly castigates. It would be interesting to know to what extent the membership of your society increased during December when compared with other months."

David Adams, another Woolwich saver from Solihull, is setting up a protest committee to try to get the society to act fairly.

He said: "I think if you have an account you ought to benefit from the shares, regardless of whether you have less than £100."

CAROLINE MERRELL

Weekend Money
is edited by
Anne Ashworth

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Morag Preston finds owning a pony calls for a tight rein on costs

A suitable case for horse sense

Please, can I have a pony? Six words some parents must dread hearing, particularly since few children will take into account the high costs involved.

For most parents, the realisation that they will be the ones to end up braving the cold and mucking out the stable comes long before any consideration of cost. Financing the latest addition to the family is an expensive afterthought, however, but one that could offer the perfect opt-out clause.

"It's like running another car," says the British Horse Society, which has more than 65,000 members, of whom 90 per cent are female.

On top of the initial purchase price, anyone who owns a horse will have to think about upkeep, which includes bedding, feed, shoeing, routine vet care and insurance. According to Russell Baldwin & Bright, purveyor of horses, 1995 was their worst sales year.

The British Horse Society says: "Horses start at £500 for something a bit little and a bit old. A riding horse might cost £1,000. And a supercharger with a bit of oomph might cost £2,500."

The price of horse depends on performance, breeding, height and age. A horse will always cost that bit more than a pony.

It costs as much, or even more to keep a bad pony as a good one, bearing in mind that a bad one will be difficult to resell. Buyers are advised to have the horse vetted, to take it home on trial, or to seek a second opinion, although the seller might not always agree. Some of the best horses are sold on by word of mouth, or are advertised in local equestrian magazines.

Excluding livery, the cost of keeping a horse is £170 a month, says the British Horse Society. "People think it's like keeping a dog, but they don't realise that horses need their feet seen to at least every six weeks, and you can't just feed them anything."

Full livery can cost as much as £70 a week, while half-livery costs between £30 and £50, where the owner is required to ride and perhaps groom the horse. If the owner



Nearly a Tiz-aw: Trudi Williams's pony Tizzy had a brush with death when it was let out of its field on to a foggy motorway

sees to all the needs of the horse, it can cost between £10 and £20 for grass livery, with a further £10 for a stable.

Keeping a horse at home is

only feasible where there is secure fencing and more than two acres of land, but this may work out cheaper in the long run.

Quality and simplicity are the key to buying equipment for a horse, but buying second-hand can cut costs by almost 50 per cent.

The price of tack varies

enormously from £7 to £15 for a head collar to £350 to £450 for a new leather saddle.

It is always advisable to buy new yard equipment, including a first-aid and grooming kit, which will cost around £75. A hard hat, which costs between £30 and £55, is perhaps the most essential piece of any rider's equipment.

The vet's bill came to £900,

which has already been set

Insurance pays for £900 veterinary fees

TRUDI WILLIAMS was in

the news last December when her pony was let out of its field in Whistable, Kent, along with two other horses, which were killed instantly on a foggy motorway. Tizzy, Ms Williams's six-year-old pony, was brought safely back to its field, but was forced to spend a week in Newham Veterinary Court Hospital with a fractured bone and severed tendons.

The vet's bill came to £900, which has already been set

through Petplan. "This is only the second year that Tizzy has been insured, and this is the second time that she has been to the vet," says Ms Williams, 21, who has owned Tizzy for four years. "I'm just relieved that I have insurance."

It costs Ms Williams £140 a year to insure Tizzy, who is worth £500. The policy includes death, theft, third party liability, personal accident, veterinary fees up to £2,000, and saddles and tack.

INSURING a horse and protecting your investment is an important cost factor that is too easily ignored. "When money is tight, insurance is one of the things that people cut back on," says the British Horse Society, which highlights the importance of public liability cover. "It's important in case your horse hits the side of a Mercedes or injures somebody when you are out on a ride. It happens — horses can be irrational."

Petplan, the largest equine insurance specialist in the United Kingdom, says that fewer than 50 per cent of horses and ponies are insured. "We have discovered that multiple owners are less likely to insure all their animals," the insurer says.

Petplan offers a range of cover, as well as tailor-made policies. Third party liability is relatively inexpensive, and is usually included in most insurance packages.

More than 50 per cent of insurance claims are for vet fees and they are the most important part of the cover, says Petplan. Among the other big equine insurers are E&L Insurance and South Essex Insurance. Bankers Equine Direct, the only direct writer in the equestrian market, which claims to insure more than 15,000 riders, says:

"Our biggest market is the riding club type of person who rides for pleasure, as opposed to high-risk eventing horses.

Generally, they are insured for up to £15,000."

New policyholders will receive three months' free cover at E&L Insurance, which says: "Because of the massive step forward where veterinary medicine is concerned, the veterinary fees for individual claims have tended to be higher."

Anyone seeking insurance cover for their horse should look for a policy that suits their particular needs, but also provides a reliable and efficient service.

A QUESTION OF MONEY

The correct line on running a lottery syndicate

By encouraging friends, family or work colleagues to play the National Lottery as part of a syndicate, you could increase your chances of winning tenfold. If you and nine friends put £1 in each week, you will have an equal share in ten sets of numbers. So if your group won a jackpot of £2 million, your share would be £200,000.

There have already been about 122 winning syndicates at jackpot or bonus level, according to Camelot, the organiser, which says 30 per cent of sales every week go to syndicates. But, unless you take the appropriate precautions, syndicates can turn the best of friends into the worst of enemies. This week, Weekend Money offers some timely advice.

Q How do you play in a group?

A There are two ways: weekly or as a multi-draw. To play weekly, the appointed manager should take the group's completed payslips to a National Lottery retailer and pay for them to be entered. A multi-draw allows the same numbers to be played every week for up to eight weeks. To ensure the choices are entered automatically for the chosen number of draws, the manager should tick the appropriate box in the column marked "Number of Draws" on the payslip.

Q How do you run a syndicate group?

A Whenever the manager collects the money, weekly or monthly, a record should be kept of who has paid what. After the manager has purchased the tickets, a photocopy should be made for each member and the originals kept in a safe place. The manager should write the syndicate members' names and addresses on the tickets. Any winnings should be collected and shared out according to the agreement.

Q What precautions can be taken by the company employing members of a syndicate?

A For less than the price of a National Lottery ticket, employers can protect themselves against financial loss after a sudden walkout by successful syndicate members. Fielding Mann, a Leeds insurance broker, has underwritten 220 policies since it set up in January last year, in association with Lloyd's of London, to meet the cost of drafting in new staff. Premiums start at £50, and the limit of indemnity is up to £300,000, or more on request. Only two syndicate members need to resign. Fielding Mann says 28 policies were signed at the last lottery rollover.

Fielding Mann: 0113 230 330
Camelot: 0645 100000

MORAG PRESTON

Focus shifts from first-time buyers

Lenders change tack to court safer borrowers, writes Sarah Jones

The emphasis on discounts and remortgaging means that rates for first-time buyers are not what they used to be.

Patrick Bunton, of London & County, the firm of mortgage brokers, says: "It was always assumed that first-time buyer rates would be lower, but that distinction has now gone. Instead, you have to find a lender who will let you borrow as much money as you need."

First-time buyers are an unknown entity to mortgage lenders because they have no track record to offer. And just as direct insurance companies give large no-claims bonuses and avoid the statistically riskier young customers, so direct mortgage lenders, too, are careful to pick safe customers.

Their rates for borrowing 95 per cent of the cost of the property are uncompetitive.

and their better rates have low maximum advances. One exception is First Direct's 6.95 per cent variable rate for 95 per cent loan.

Similarly, some of the best fixed and discount rates have low maximum advances. The Hinckley & Rugby 0.5 per cent one-year fixed rate has a maximum advance of 70 per cent, as does the Northern Counties 1.5 per cent discount for five years.

So where can a first-time buyer find a good rate? It tends to be very expensive to

borrow the total value of your property. The Bank of Scotland does offer a 100 per cent loan — but at a variable rate of 7.99 per cent. It would be better to take a cheaper 95 per cent advance, borrowing the remaining 5 per cent from elsewhere.

If income is tight and a borrower needs to budget, London & County suggests the Northern Rock's five-year fixed rate of 6.99 per cent. With that solution, even if rates shoot up after the next general election, mortgage payments will remain the same.

If a borrower can be more flexible, the Coventry's 1.25 per cent discount on base rate until 2000 is worth considering. It means lower payments than with the Northern Rock at the moment, but if interest rates go up, borrowers would need to be able to cope with higher payments.

Along with compulsory building insurance, it seems that you now need a sound knowledge of algebra to get a good mortgage rate.

A Times reader recently asked Cheltenham & Gloucester, his mortgage lender, why the monthly payments he makes for his fixed-rate mortgage are being varied by the society. The lender's explanation is shown in the illustration.

What the lender was trying to say is that

Miras, mortgage relief, has been reduced twice since he took out his fixed-rate mortgage and that this will inevitably alter his repayments. Because he is on an "annual instalment review scheme", he did not immediately start paying the extra interest caused by Miras going down.

So, for a while, he was paying less than he was being charged. It was all refigged at the end of the year and the extra interest

rate, n — remaining term of years, L = limit of tax relief, and t = tax rate. Debt Isaac, of Cheltenham & Gloucester, said: "We used the formula to illustrate to him that he is paying the correct instalments. It may look ludicrous out of context but it makes sense within the full explanation our customer received."

Most mortgages come within the Miras (mortgage interest relief at source) scheme which allows you to pay a reduced level of interest to your lender. That currently means you pay 15 per cent less interest on the first £30,000 of your loan. The lender in turn claims the shortfall from the Inland Revenue. The relief was reduced from 25 per cent to 20 per cent in April 1994 and subsequently to 15 per cent last year.

SARAH JONES

Loan sum adds up to confusion

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Fitz would break the silence of the lambs



COMMENT

ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance
Editor

The bosses of the Alliance & Leicester Building Society have obviously been watching too many TV police dramas. After a series of *Cracker*, they have become hooked on suspense and have come to believe that their customers share the same weakness.

Fitz, the bulky psychologist, embodied by Robbie Coltrane, would put them right, in a few blunt words. In real life, people prefer certainty. When the Alliance & Leicester confirmed its plans to seek a stock market listing this week, few details were available. The all-important structure of the share distribution remains a secret. This means that no-one knows whether long-term savers with four-figure balances will receive a greater reward. Or whether every qualifying saver will be treated equally. The

Alliance & Leicester's patronising refusal to elaborate on its plans contrasts markedly with the Halifax and the Woolwich, the other societies, destined to become banks. Recognising their members' right to information, both outlined how they would divide the spoils.

The society claims that it wishes to spare the three million members the pain suffered by those who were suddenly excluded from the Cheltenham & Gloucester payout. But it also has on its mind the already consider-

able discontent among the two million customers who cannot benefit, including the Girobank faithful. They maintain that the acquisition of Girobank gave the Alliance & Leicester the muscle to achieve its current position.

The Alliance & Leicester hopes it will lessen the offence given to this group if it stays silent as long as possible about the size of the windfalls. It would be better to come clean now and offer those who cannot join in the fun a discount on the shares at the stock market debut.

This level of ignorance is alarming. It also shows that insurance companies and company pension schemes are failing to promote properly the need for retirement provision. One sad consequence of all the pension scandals seems to be that people are as fearful of the means of pension savings as of poverty in old age itself.

Climate of fear

The financial habits of the nation are nowadays as frequently surveyed as those of the sexual sort. In the main, this money-management research tells you next-to-nothing that you

Highway robbery premiums

Marianne Curphey on the rise in motorway getaways

Millions of people who live within easy reach of a motorway are at a greater than average risk of being burgled, research by insurance companies has shown.

Cities like Bristol, Birmingham and Oxford are popular with organised gangs who stage early morning raids and then drive back to London or other big cities to sell stolen goods in pubs and car boot sales in the afternoon.

Since their booty is sold on so quickly, it makes it more difficult for the police to trace.

The Association of British Insurers says towns on the borders of the M25 and with connections to the M3, M4, M11 and M40 are at risk, as are Scottish towns within easy reach of the North East of England. Royal Insurance, with one million UK motorists and 2.5 million homes on its books, said the problem is growing.

"In the old days criminals lived and burgled locally," said Roy Randall, head of communications. "Now the pattern is changing and they are travelling further afield, and areas close to motorways are bearing the brunt of this."

In addition, Wiltshire, Berkshire and Avon, the counties surrounding the M4 between London and Bristol, are notorious for computer chip theft. With the advent of new technology, insurers are now able to make very detailed assessments of your chance of being burgled. The Royal now uses a

database to analyse risk by looking at postcodes which breaks down areas into units as small as 15 houses.

"It is possible you could be paying less than your neighbours in the same street and the difference in premiums within one borough could be as much as 10 to 15 per cent. We have 1.6 million post codes on our database and we can identify, for example, whether your home backs on to a school playing field. If it does, it might carry a greater risk because of easy access for burglars," Mr Randall said.

Though it is difficult to find an average premium because rates vary so widely, for a Victorian three-bedroom detached house in a town like Reading, a 15 per cent difference in price could mean £22 more or less on a basic £150 buildings premium. The Royal also applies postcode ratings to the one million motorists it insures, since vehicle theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in the United Kingdom.

Direct Line, the direct insurers with 750,000 homes on its books, says analysing risk for buildings and structure as well as for household contents by using the full postcode and not just the borough, is becoming increasingly widespread.

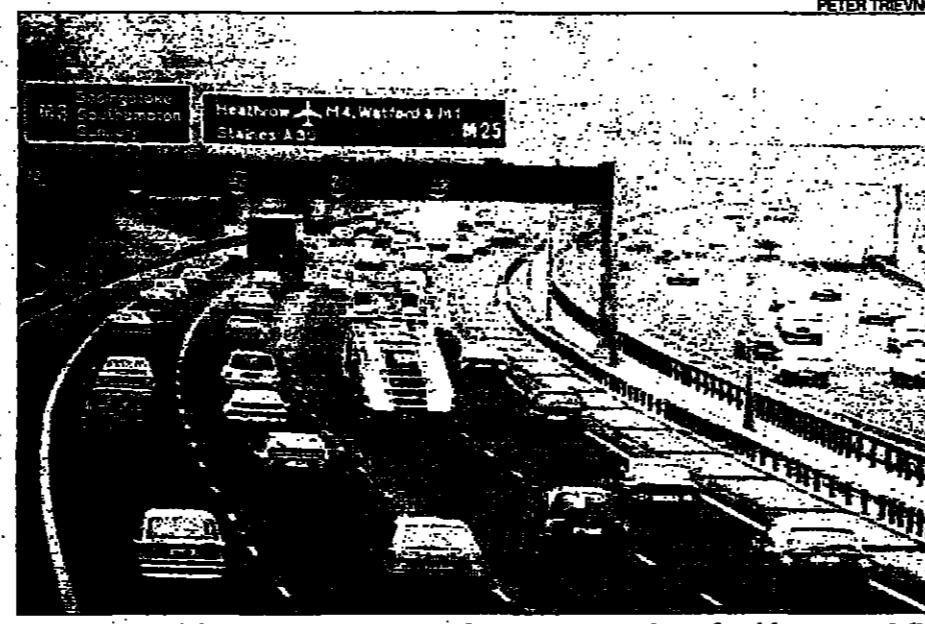
"Though we do not use full postcodes in all areas, they are useful in places like London where some homes are built on hills and the clay soil underneath is very susceptible to subsidence in the hot weather. Likewise, a home close to a river is at greater risk of flooding than one three-quarters of a mile away," it said.

New technology has also brought more sophisticated ways of detecting fraud. The Royal uses an image-processing system which can tell whether invoices or quotations for repair work have been tampered with in order to increase the claim.

"Industry research has revealed one in four claims are fraudulent in some way, but by detecting fraud we can help to keep costs down and ensure innocent policy-holders are not paying for other people's dishonesty," Mr Randall says.

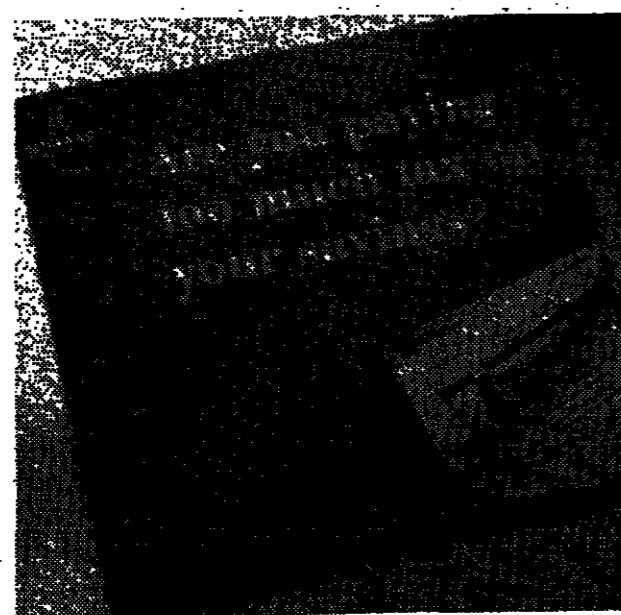
Insurance firms with large databases can track policy-holders who make multiple claims, or spot patterns of claims. The Royal gives a 5 per cent discount to householders who are members of a neighbourhood watch scheme, and a further 15 per cent if you fit a burglar alarm.

If you are prepared to haggle over the premium you are offered, and you are prepared to pay the first £100 to £500 of any claim, your insurance company may agree to reduce the fee in order to keep you as a customer.



Heavy costs: living near a motorway makes transport easier — for thieves especially

MIDLAND



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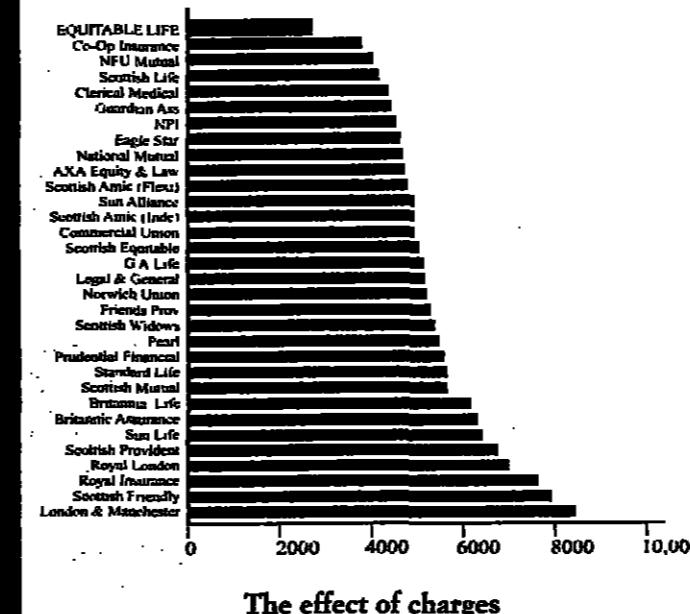
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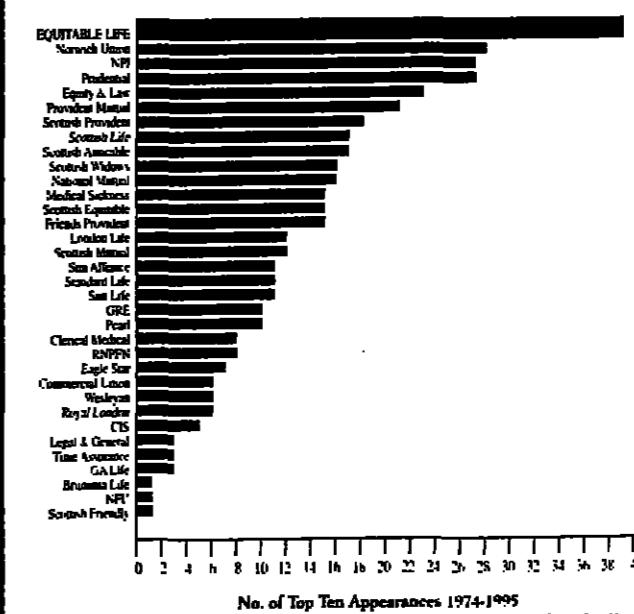
PRICE

New rules came into force this year which require companies to disclose to potential buyers the cost of investments such as personal pension plans. Comparing the charges made by different companies can be quite revealing.

The chart above left compares the effect of the charges made by various companies to recoup such costs as commission, remuneration and administration for a £200 pm, 10 year regular contribution with-profits personal pension plan. Source: Money Management, October 1995.

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Marianne Curphey considers the rates now on offer from National Savings

Many happy returns for investors who played safe

In spite of the recent reduction in interest rates for National Savings certificates, thousands of savers will have a cause for celebration in the coming weeks. These are the people who invested in the 35th issue of fixed-rate certificates five years ago and locked into a rate of 9.35 per cent.

Their funds are maturing between now and the end of March. Though at the time the rate looked rather miserly, compared with the building society variable rates of up to 15 per cent, as interest rates fell it became increasingly attractive. Now every £1,000 invested has grown to £1,574 and the interest is tax-free and waiting to be collected.

National Savings products are backed by the Government and are regarded as a safe form of investment. They guarantee a return of your capital, plus varying rates of interest, depending on the type chosen. They are a huge source of revenue for the Government and contributed £2.8 billion to funding in the tax year to April 1995. This year that figure is expected to rise to £3 billion. Currently, 30 million people have National Savings products and their holdings are worth £54.5 billion.

One of the advantages of National Savings certificates is that they are tax-free — they compare favourably with most building society accounts, which take tax off before you receive interest. For higher rate taxpayers the tax advantages are even greater. Interest

is added on to the value of your certificate, and you get it when you cash in the certificate.

Savers benefit from National Savings when the Treasury needs money and sets rates high. But rates are subject to political pressure and the Government has just announced it intends to reduce the interest rates, a move prompted by the fall in yields on gilts, which are fixed-interest stocks issued by the Government, and by the cut in the bank base rate.

Some changes will be immediate, others will come into force next month. So are the National Savings products still competitive, or would savers be best advised to look elsewhere?

PREMIUM BONDS

The £1 million Premium Bond jackpot has survived, but at the expense of the growing number of small payouts of £50 and £100. From May, the number of prizes will be limited to 350,000 a month and the interest rate on Premium Bond investments, used to fund prize money, will be cut from 5.2 to 4.75 per cent. National Savings says it has increased the size of prizes in response to customer demand.

FREE RATES

Savings certificates. The 9th Index-linked Issue certificates are now on sale and offering a return of 2.5 per cent per annum compound on top of the rate of inflation, compared with the 8th issue, which was pegged at 3 per cent and is no longer available. The minimum investment is £100, up to a maximum of £10,000, and must be held for five years. The new 43rd fixed rate issue will pay 5.35 per cent a year compound if held for five years, down half a point.

The latter is still a good investment, says David Wells of Binder Hamlyn, the independent financial adviser. "For a higher rate 40 per cent taxpayer to match a 5.35 per cent tax-free rate, he or she would have to find an investment worth 8.02 per cent before tax. With the index-linked issue, if inflation remains at 3.2 per cent, the return after five years is 5.7 per cent, which is a higher rate taxpayer is worth 9.5 per cent. If inflation rises, this investment will give you an even better return."

He believes savers who can afford to take a five-year view should also be looking at investing in tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas — see the Weekend Money Guide with today's paper) and personal equity plans (Peps).

Capital bonds: These bonds, which have a minimum opening balance of £100, have fallen 1.1 points to 6.65 per cent



worth **SAVING** for

National Savings products have always been safe and sound but are they still competitive?

compound, if held for five years. They are paid gross, but the interest is taxable. Likewise, rates on Children's Bonus Bonds, which are tax-free, have fallen 1.1 points to 6.75 per cent on investments over £25 and £1,000.

David Wells still believes the Children's Bonus Bonds are a good investment, as they remain the market leader.

First option bonds: These pay gross rates guaranteed for a year at a time. For investments of between £1,000 and £19,999 the rate is 6.25 per cent (down 0.15 of a point), while above £20,000 it has fallen 0.3 of a point, to 6.5 per cent.

Marion Coss, of Sedgwick Financial Services, says these bonds are an advantage to non-taxpayers because they remove the hassle of having to claim back tax already paid.

Income bonds: These are three-months' notice accounts paying gross interest, are now paying 0.25 per cent less interest. Between £2,000 and £24,000 the rate is 6.25 per cent, rising to 6.5 per cent for amounts between £25,000 and £250,000.

After basic rate tax at 25 per cent this would be worth 4.3 per cent. However, come April savers will see tax on their interest drop to 20 per cent after measures to reward savers in the Budget. Northern Rock is currently paying 7.20 per cent gross on balances of £25,000 in its 120-day notice postal account.

Income bonds, which are a

three-months' notice account

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When it's good to talk

Sara McConnell
explains the
reasons for
repossession
and the easiest
ways to avoid it

Q You miss a mortgage payment and your lender writes to you asking why. What do you do next?

A You should reply to the letter, even if your instinctive reaction is to throw it in the bin and forget about it. If you ignore the first letter you will get another in about two weeks, asking what is going on, followed by a series of letters at approximately weekly intervals. The tone will become less concerned and more threatening. You will stop being addressed by your name and become Sir or Madam. The lender's solicitors will take over threatening court action to repossess. The more problem lenders have making contact with you, the more aggressive they are likely to be in the long run. Keith Tondeur, director of Credit Action, the educational charity, says: "The best thing to do is get the lender on your side. You could even go so far as to warn it in advance if you hear there could be redundancies at your firm. The lender could suggest an adjustment of mortgage payments to help."

Q The reason why you can't pay your mortgage is because you have lost your job. Where do you go from here?

A You should sign on immediately for income support to help you with



Nowhere to go: the misery of homelessness as vividly portrayed in *Cathy Come Home*

mortgage payments. Even if you have received a redundancy lump sum and so have too much money at the moment to qualify, signing on immediately could prevent delays in income support when you come to claim. You should be able to claim unemployment

benefit. You will not qualify for income support if your married partner is still working, even though your mortgage was calculated using both your incomes. If you have private insurance to cover your loan, you should claim at once because you normally

have to wait at least a month for a payout, and delays in claims delay payouts.

Q Income support will pay you nothing for the first two months and then only 50 per cent of your interest for the next four, although you

will get it eventually. How can you manage now?

A This delay is bad news, particularly if you have few savings and your redundancy payment was small or non-existent. You will almost certainly slip further into arrears. Even if you have avoided your lender until now, you should start to negotiate. You can negotiate at any stage, even when you face a court hearing. You should also talk to your local Citizens Advice Bureau or your local authority debt advice service. If you have mortgage debts, you are probably having problems with other bills as well. Check you are claiming all the benefits to which you are entitled.

Q You get a summons to the county court from the lender's solicitor. Is this the end?

A Your arrears are rolling up and you are falling further behind with payments. But you can still negotiate with your lender. Contact the lender directly rather than the lender's solicitors. Before you get to court, try to contact the Citizens Advice Bureau's office at the court. It may be able to represent you and will try to get you a suspended possession order, allowing you to keep your home as long as you pay the amount set by the court for a certain period of time. The court does not have the power to dismiss the arrears or decide you can pay less than at least the mortgage you are meant to be paying. Alternatively, the judge can throw out the possession altogether (unlikely) or grant the lender repossession in 28 days.

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A policy of response to criticism

Lenders and insurance companies are being forced to review the terms and costs of private insurance to cover mortgage payments after fierce criticism of existing policies. Last October's cuts in income support highlighted the inadequacies of policies which did not cover existing borrowers or the self-employed, did not pay out for up to six months and were too expensive for many borrowers on top of mortgage payments. Research, most recently on behalf of the Department of the Environment, found that two thirds of the claims made on mortgage payment protection policies were rejected.

Now insurers say they are trying to make up for past failings. Steve Devine, strategic development manager of Pinnacle Insurance, which underwrites large numbers of policies for lenders, says: "One thing that's emerged out of all this is that insurers have a perception and image problem with the pub-

lic. Insurers have to get their act together." The Association of British Insurers, the industry's trade body, has put together a code of practice under which companies should explain conditions and exclusions clearly to borrowers and commit themselves to assessing claims promptly and efficiently.

There is some evidence that cover and costs are adapting to the new regime. Two societies, the Skipton and the Market Harborough, now offer their existing and new borrowers free unemployment insurance for the term of the mortgage. The policy will pay the mortgage only to cover the nine-month gap until borrowers can claim income support. The Skipton policy will not start paying until a borrower has been unemployed for two months, while the Market Harborough will not pay out until one month is up. Both societies believe it benefits them as well as borrowers if they can avoid

the costly process of repossessing homes and trying to sell them in a dead housing market.

According to Mr Devine, most lenders now offer existing borrowers cover as well as new borrowers. Some, including Lloyds Bank, Commercial Union, Midland, General Accident, National & Provincial and Birmingham Midshires, have portable policies for borrowers who have their mortgages with other lenders.

But critics of the policies say cover on most policies is still too restrictive. Self-employed or contract workers, for example, often have to demonstrate that their contracts have been renewed without a gap over a set period before they qualify. To claim, self-employed people may have to show that they have told the Inland Revenue that they have gone into liquidation.

SARA McCONNELL

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The dismemberment of the River & Mercantile group, one of the UK's largest investment trust groups, will bring to an end more than 100 years of association with the investment trust industry.

The management of the five-strong investment trust range, with about £370 million in assets from thousands of investors, is in the process of being auctioned off to pay for the expansion of the remaining business in other areas.

The holding company for the investment trusts, River & Mercantile Investment Management (RMIM), is spinning off the management to build up a new unit trust operation. Already, the income trust has gone to Jupiter and the American trust has been passed over to Henderson Touche Remnant. It is rumoured that River & Mercantile Trust itself is about to be snapped up by Robert Fleming, the investment bank.

The sharp change in direc-

tion of the group was precipitated by the acquisition last year of a 49.9 per cent stake in RMIM by John Beckwith, a property developer.

Mr Beckwith has an option to buy the remaining part of RMIM, which is owned by the £200 million River & Mercantile Trust. The trust is the jewel in the River & Mercantile crown and can trace its roots back to 1881, when William Gladstone was Prime Minister. It was set up to provide funds for the development of industry in Argentina.

Other investment trust managers are circling round to try to buy up the funds — either to increase their funds under management or to try to fill a gap in their fund range.

A change in fund manager does not need shareholder approval, only the board of the particular investment trust has to agree to the transfer. The seemingly less important action of changing a trust's name does need shareholder approval. It is a condition of the transfer that all five investment trusts change their

Gladstone was PM when River & Mercantile Trust was set up

names. So what can the thousands of investors with River & Mercantile expect under the new arrangements? This week, Henderson Touche Remnant announced that it had taken over the running of River & Mercantile's American fund. The fund will fill a gap in the Henderson Touche Remnant stable — it is unusual in not having a specialist American fund.

James de Sausmarez, Henderson Touche Remnant Investment Funds managing director, said it would offer investors in the £28 million fund the opportunity to roll over investments into a new fund when the investment trust comes to the end of its life in three years.

The fund manager also pledged to reduce the discount on the split capital trust, which is currently around the 30 per cent mark. The fund will be managed by Christopher Galleymore, head of Henderson's North American team.

Mr de Sausmarez said: "North America has been a significant gap in our range of managed investment trusts and we are delighted that R&M have decided to join us and fill that gap."

Mr de Sausmarez said he would consult the shareholders about what form the new investment vehicle would take, adding that it would not necessarily be offering a split capital trust as the successor.

Mr Galleymore was optimistic about the prospects for the US market this year. He has managed to outperform S&P 500 index by 1 per cent a year over the past ten years.

The only change proposed for those invested in the River & Mercantile's £75 million

extra income fund is a change of name. John Duffield, Jupiter chairman, said Jupiter was in the process of writing to shareholders to get approval for the name change. The shares in the fund are now trading more or less at par to net asset value.

Jupiter is taking Anthony Nutt, the investment trust manager, from River & Mercantile. Mr Duffield said: "There will be no change in the investment trust strategy. The wind-up date of the fund is in four years' time."

The fate of the remaining two trusts is yet to be decided. Hambros Magan, the merchant bank carrying out the auction, declined to comment on the progress of the sale of the two remaining funds. Guinness Flight is believed to be the lead contender for the management of the R&M Smaller Companies Trust.

The carve-up of the investment trust group has left many analysts baffled. After all, they point out, it is perfectly possible for investment trusts and unit trusts to coexist within the same fund management group. Perpetual, Schroder, M&G are just a few of the investment houses that run both types of fund.

Rob Robertson, Kleinwort Benson's investment trust analyst, said: "The whole thing could be seen as a revenue-raising exercise to fund expansion of the business."

There is a general consensus among analysts that the investment trust market is set for rationalisation. Funds trading at big discounts could be the target for fund managers looking to increase their funds under management. The attraction for investors is that they could benefit from a decrease in the discount.

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while Marianne Curphey gives a progress report on a venture capital group

Adventure with a new 3i Pep

The venture capital company, 3i, which brought Alders, Laura Ashley, Waterstones, Denby, Pottery and Prontaprint to the stock market, is about to relaunch its own personal equity plan (Pep).

More than 500 private investors already hold the 3i group investment trust shares in a general Pep (it is not eligible for the single-company Pep) and most of them joined last July after a change in the rules under which trusts qualified as Pepsable.

3i aims to invest in small unquoted companies with potential to grow and to lend them investment capital to expand. The company, once called Investors in Industry and established in 1945, invests more than £1 million every day and has supported more than 1,300 management buyouts and over 300 buy-ins.

Since its flotation in July 1994, the value of its shares has risen 55 per cent, while that of the FTSE all share index has risen 22 per cent. After coming to the stock market at 272p, its shares are now trading at about 411p, after reaching a high of 444p last November.

There is no initial charge to set up the new 3i Pep, but there is a management charge of 0.5 per cent each year and a 0.25 per cent levy on the value of shares bought or sold through the plan.

Recently, 3i shares have been edging lower. One of the reasons was Midland Bank's decision to sell 30.7 million shares, 5.3 per cent of 3i's share capital, worth £120 million.

So have we seen the best of the trust's growth, or is there more to come?

Iain Sculler, investment trust analyst with SBC Warburg, believes the shares are "pretty dull" and are unlikely to show much movement unless smaller companies in general are rated in the market. He also suspects Barclays and the Royal Bank of Scotland may wish to follow Midland's example and sell their stakes, worth a combined 8 per cent of share capital, which would further depress prices.

His recommendations for those investors keen on smaller companies would be Invesco England and International; NatWest Smaller Companies; and Hoare Govett Smaller Companies trusts.

Matthew Orr of Kilik & Co, the broker, says 3i has been "a tremendous success" since it was floated and has a very diverse portfolio. He believes there is room for smaller companies, which failed to match the strong growth of the FTSE 100 index of leading shares last year, to catch up in 1996.

"3i has a good geographical spread with offices around the country and, unlike many venture capital companies, can afford to be choosy about the enterprises it backs. I am bullish about the UK stock



Waterstone was one of 3i's better-known launch successes

market this year because I believe interest rates and inflation will continue to fall, which will boost equities," he says.

However, for investors looking to invest in small companies, he also recommends the Invesco English and International trust (currently trading at 449p per share), and Montanoro UK Smaller Companies, a relatively unknown trust launched last year currently trading at a discount to net asset value. This means the shares are selling for less than the trust's underlying assets are worth and may indicate that they are a worthwhile purchase.

Peter Walls, investment trust analyst at Credit Lyonnais Leing, says 3i shares are "not a bargain" for investors because they are still trading at a slight premium to their net asset value. However, over the last 12 months the premium has come down from 14 per cent to around 4 per cent now.

He suggests that if investors do buy into a 3i Pep, they should be prepared to hold the shares for at least five years, possibly ten, to take full advantage of tax-free growth.

He says: "It is a solid but unexciting investment. Smaller companies may start to pick up in 1996 but will probably not do so well in 1997."

"In the context of the FTSE all share index I would rate the 3i investment trust as medium-to-low risk. If you are looking to buy into venture capital I would recommend Murray Ventures, which does larger and fewer deals than 3i."

"This trust's shares are currently trading at a 15 per cent discount to their net assets value and are likely to do better than 3i in the next couple of years."

Meanwhile Hill Samuel Asset Management is launching a UK emerging companies investment trust which will invest in about 40 quoted smaller companies, mostly with market capitalisation below £50 million (Market capitalisation is calculated by multiplying the share price by the number of



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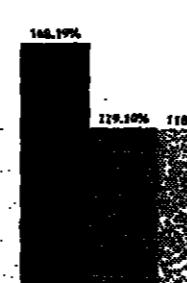
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Dividends are small payments that often make big news. In Granada's bitterly fought takeover of Forte, the hotel group, the special dividend payments promised to Forte shareholders was an important part of the package that helped to swing the vote in Granada's favour.

The level of dividend payouts made by the privatised utilities has also been in the spotlight, with electricity and water companies providing some of the best dividend returns in the stock market.

Q What is a dividend?

A Publicly quoted companies share part of their profits with shareholders by way of dividends. For each share held, a dividend of a specified amount is normally paid. The payments are usually in two stages. The first is made after the company announces its half-year or interim figures, with the final dividend figure given with full-year results. Shareholders vote on the proposed payouts at the company's annual meeting.

Q How are dividends paid?

A Payments to ordinary shareholders are made

Clare Stewart tells shareholders what they need to know to get a bigger slice of the investment cake



after those due to preference shareholders. Payments are made net of tax, with basic tax deducted in the form of advanced corporation tax paid by the issuing company.

Q Do I pay more if I am a higher rate taxpayer?

A If you are a 40 per cent taxpayer, your dividend income will be liable to a

stating how much has been deducted. Non-taxpayers or those on low incomes can claim back the income tax paid at 20 per cent.

Q What if I am a shareholder, not pay tax?

A The dividend payment comes with a tax voucher.

further 20 per cent tax, with dividends added on to your total income.

If, for example, you received £4,000 in dividend payments,

on top of other earnings totalling £22,000, the extra tax liability would be £340, arising from the £1,700 of income tax at 40 per cent. This applies in the current tax year where the threshold for 40 per cent tax is £24,300, rising to £25,500 in 1996-97. Dividend income has to be declared on annual tax returns.

Q What are special or super dividends?

A These have hit the headlines recently with a number of the regional electricity companies such as Yorkshire and East Midlands giving shareholders an extra dividend on top of normal payments. Companies making these payments may be looking to return surplus cash to shareholders, a move that will serve to boost the attraction of the shares, or the payment may be given in the course of a takeover battle.

A company fending off a hostile bid might promise extra dividends to its shareholders as part of a reward to help to ensure their loyalty.

Forte in its bid to fight off Granada promised to raise the annual dividend by 20 per cent a year until the end of the decade. Granada countered by raising its initial offer for Forte to £3.74 billion and included the option of a special dividend of 47p per share.

For non-taxpaying shareholders such as the pension funds, that 47p would be bumped up with a tax credit of 12p – no small sum considering the millions of shares held by these big institutions.

Q What does ex mean in share price listings?

A If ex appears next to a share price in newspaper listings it means ex-dividend. That is to say if you had just bought the shares you would not be entitled to the most recently announced dividend payment.

Q What is the dividend yield?

A This is a measure of the return provided by dividends on your share investment, and used as one of the measures of a company's performance. Newspaper share listings will show a yield figure that will vary with each price change.

If, for example, you bought shares in Sprocket Ltd for 500p and received a dividend for the year of 14p gross, the yield would be 2.8 (14p as a percentage of 500p).

A high-yielding share might indicate better immediate returns, but could also mean that the company is showing only slow profits growth. A low-yielding share might be seen as a company promising substantial profit growth and dividends in the future.

These assumptions can be challenged, however, given that dividend payments are variable and at the company's discretion. So they could be influenced not just by profitability but by other factors such as the threat of a takeover.

Q What is meant by dividend cover?

A This can be read as an indication of the company's financial health. The dividend cover is calculated by dividing the available net profits by the total cost of the dividend payments. If Sprocket showed a net profit of £22,000 and decided to pay out £6,000 in dividends, the dividend cover will be 3.6 times.

The higher the figure the healthier the business looks, though there are occasions when a company continues to pay a dividend even though it is making a loss. If it believes its losses are only temporary it may well draw on its reserves to meet the dividend payment, hoping to reassure shareholders and prevent the company's share price falling sharply.

Q Do companies have to pay a dividend?

A Dividend payments are optional payments made by the company directors, though the failure to pay is clearly going to diminish the attraction of the shares and therefore knock the share price. A decision may be taken to pass or reduce the payments if the profits have fallen, though companies again might seek to reassure shareholders by forecasting a return to dividend payments by a certain date.

Q What is a scrip dividend?

A Shareholders may be given the option of taking the dividend in cash or subscribing for an equivalent value in shares.

Q Where can information on a company's dividend performance be found?

A Annual reports will usually detail the company's performance in terms of profits or losses, dividend growth and share price performance over a five-year period.

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Karen Zagor examines a sector that is back in fashion

Emerging into favour

After two years in the doldrums, emerging markets have started the year with a bang, encouraging investors to turn their attention back towards Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Jean De Bolle, global portfolio manager at Foreign & Colonial emerging markets, notes: "The sentiment clearly turned during December and that has continued through the new year. Most emerging markets are up 5 per cent, and many are up 10 per cent in US dollar terms since the start of the year. And they are still quite cheap on a relative basis."

But with the memory of Mexico's financial collapse still fresh, the faint-hearted would do well to steer clear of emerging markets — those countries in which the economy has not yet matured, such as India, Thailand, Chile, South Africa, even Greece or Portugal.

Such investments usually involve buying the shares or bonds of a company which is either based in an emerging market or does the bulk of its business in one. For private investors, the easiest way to put money into an emerging market is through a specialised investment or unit trust.

Because of the rapid economic growth, emerging market investments can provide far higher returns than investments in more mature, and safer, markets. According to figures from Micropal, £100 invested in an average emerging market fund in January 1990 would have grown to £292.39 by January 1996, compared with £213.39 for the average UK equity growth unit trust. The discrepancy between different emerging market funds, however, is enormous.



BILL SANDERSON

Investors are also increasingly optimistic about the prospects for Chile, Peru and Brazil.

In 1995, Africa enjoyed a year of unprecedented growth for foreign investors, with returns, in US dollar terms, in the region of 40 per cent. The lifting of apartheid in South Africa has proved the catalyst for change throughout the region. African countries are edging towards more realistic exchange rates, lifting exchange controls and removing subsidies and price controls, all of which makes for a better investment environment.

"South Africa has done surprisingly well," says Mr De Bolle. "The political risk has diminished and the new ANC Government has shown itself very capable of managing the economy."

Later this year, Mr De Bolle expects strong returns from Korea and India. Russia, however, remains an enigma. The advantages of the country's rich resources have been more than offset by its crumbling infrastructure, chaotic regulations and political instability. Some problems that faced investors have been resolved, but, with a presidential election looming, the consensus is that investors should watch rather than jump in.

One lesson that came out of Mexico, says Mr Luddington, is that investors should pick individual countries rather than put their money into a region. "Make sure you read as much of the available economic data on the individual countries as possible. That way you can compile some sort of batting order in terms of preference for investments."

Above all, make sure you achieve a balanced portfolio in terms of geographic risk."

The same amount invested in top-performing Genesis Chile Fund would have risen to £737.04. At the bottom of the performance table, £100 in BMF Indonesian Growth fund would have dropped to £44.67.

However, experts are optimistic as a growing number of countries in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa appear to be on the road to

greater political and economic stability. Richard Luddington, head of emerging market debt syndicate at J P Morgan, says: "The current, relatively low level of international interest rates and the expectation of sustained growth rates for emerging markets, especially when compared with G7 countries, are making people feel pretty bullish in 1996."

Pep with mix of funds for astute investor

who says the more discerning Pep and unit trust investors are looking for capital growth.

Mr Bateman adds: "There has recently been a proliferation of Peps — emphasising income from UK investments, but Fidelity's experience is that more than half of the income will be reinvested. We believe that these investors should really be using capital-growth Peps."

The funds in the Triple Performance Pep have an outstanding track record," says Mark Bolland, a technical director at Chamberlain de

MORAG PRESTON

The Fidelity Triple Performance Pep combines top-performing funds — Special Situations, European Trust and South-East Asia Trust — within a Pep portfolio. For the first time, the South East Asia Trust is available within a Pep at a lower initial charge than the standard 5.25 per cent unit trust equivalent.

Investors who take a Triple Performance Pep in the 1995-96 tax year, at 3 per cent initial charge and 1.5 per cent annual management fee, will have the opportunity to invest in a new Pep in 1996-97 with no initial charge. The minimum investment is £3,000. An investor using their full allowance for the current year and next can invest up to £12,000.

The current Pep market is two thirds income and one third growth, according to Barry Bateman, president of Fidelity Investments Europe.

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The growth potential of all qualifying investments - UK and European shares, fixed interest stocks (bonds), as well as unit and investment trusts.

Freedom to tailor your investments to your personal needs, instead of having to accept a pre-packaged unit or investment trust version.

Personal advice from your Killik & Co stockbroker whenever you want it, allied to our ability to improve on the dealing price.

Better value, with no Killik charge when you transfer to us and no annual percentage management fee - however high the value of your PEP grows. We charge competitively and only for the work we do: for your deals (1.65% min £40) and handling your dividends (£7.50 each including tax reclaim).

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THEN YOU READ THIS.

You're bound to have noticed that M&G and Perpetual have both announced new investment trust issues to attract the PEP investor.

You should also know of an important announcement from

GT Global. Our Income Growth PEP

isn't so different from the others in investment strategy. But as the table shows, the big difference is that it offers you more assets for your money. As you probably know

investment trust shares frequently

trade at a discount to their net asset value. An investment in the

GT Global PEP takes advantage of this discount factor. Do

To: Client Services Dept, GT Global, 14th Floor, Alban Gate,

125 London Wall, London EC2Y 5AS.

remember that discounts can widen as well as narrow and that share prices fluctuate.

And incidentally, if you enjoy the reassurance of investing with a

major player, it's good to know that these days the LGT Group has rather more money entrusted to it than M&G and Perpetual combined.*

For full details about how the GT Income Growth PEP quite literally gives you more for your money than

the others, contact your financial adviser, return the coupon or call 0800 212 274 now.



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*Net assets per share less expenses of reorganisation expressed as a percentage of the offer price plus the PEP charge including VAT. *As at 1/1/96. **Investing in USD C Investment Trust plc. Past performance is no guide to the future. Issued by GT Global Investment Funds Ltd which is regulated by the FSA. The value of shares and the income from them may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount originally invested. PEP legislation can change at any time and the value of tax concessions will depend on individual circumstances.

Abbey National cuts savers' rates

ABBEY NATIONAL has introduced new interest rates on its range of savings accounts, which means an average decrease of 0.25 per cent in interest for savers. Savers' rates have been implemented at the same time as the latest mortgage rate reduction, also of 0.25 per cent, announced in December.

The new rate for an Instant Saver with £10,000 in his or her account is 3.45 per cent per annum, compared with a previous return of 3.75 per cent. For a Regular Saver with £10,000, it is now 3.55 per cent. Abbey National's Postal Account annual rates will be effective from February 12.

■ Direct Line Financial Services are launching a telephone savings account called the Direct Line Instant Access Account. Savers will be able to make transactions over the telephone, and money can be moved into and out of the account without notice and without losing interest.

The account includes an interest-maximising facility, which will allow savers to pool the balances held in separate accounts of family and friends, and earn interest at the rate applicable to the combined balance. For cus-

tomers wishing to segment their savings, the "Jam Jar" money management service is available. Account holders can store their savings in up to 20 sub-accounts to suit their needs. To open a Direct Line Instant Access account, call 0181 667 1121 (London) or 0141 221 1121 (Glasgow).

■ Investors have a tendency to focus on yield when making their purchase decision for Corporate Bond Peps, overlooking the fact that the potential a fund may offer is strongly linked to the risks inherent in its make-up, according to Allenbridge, the Pep analyst.

A free Corporate Bond Pep Rating Predictor to aid investors with risk assessment is now available from Allenbridge. It includes detailed research on 14 top Pep recommendations. The various risks assessed for each fund include: sensitivity to interest rate movements, credit risk to measure the likelihood of default by the issuer of the bond, the level of liquidity and diversification. For a free PEPTALK package, including the risk evaluator, call 0500 551000.

LIZZANE ROSE

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME Rates as at February 1, 1996

	Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year	5,000	AIG Life	4.65
	10,000	AIG Life	4.75
	20,000	AIG Life	4.85
	50,000	AIG Life	5.00
2 Years	5,000	AIG Life	4.93
	10,000	AIG Life	5.03
	20,000	AIG Life	5.18
	50,000	AIG Life	5.33
3 Years	1,000	Premium Life	4.70
	5,000	AIG Life	5.02
	10,000	AIG Life	5.22
	20,000	AIG Life	5.33
	50,000	AIG Life	5.42
4 Years	1,000	Premium Life	5.20
	20,000	Prudential Assurance	5.30
	50,000	Prudential Assurance	5.40
5 Years	1,000	Premium Life	5.50
	3,000	Pinnacle Insur	6.20

Source: Chamberlain de Bok 0171 434 4222. Net rates, income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

SAVERS' BEST BOYS

INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNTS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Prizell Bank 0800 373191	Prosperity	Postal	£2,500	5.60	Y/y
Bristol & West BS 0800 303330	Direct Saving	Postal	£5,000	5.75	Y/y
Bristol & West BS 0800 303330	Direct Saving	Postal	£25,000	6.00	Y/y
Scottish Widows Bank 0345 829929	Instant Acc	Postal	£50,000	6.15	Y/y

NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Cheltenham & Glouc 0500 248610	Direct 30	30 day p	£1,000	6.50	Y/y
Cheltenham & Glouc 0500 248610	Direct 30	30 day p	£10,000	6.75	Y/y
Cheltenham & Glouc 0500 248610	Direct 30	30 day p	£25,000	7.10	Y/y
Cheltenham & Glouc 0500 248610	Guar Growth	31.97	£5,000	6.50	F/OM
West Bromwich BS 0121 6808024					

FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bank of Ireland 0800 833937					
Allied Trust Bank 0171 62608079					
Cheltenham & Glouc 0800 717505					
Principality BS 01222 344188					

SECOND TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bank of Ireland 0800 833937					
Allied Trust Bank 0171 62608079					
Cheltenham & Glouc 0800 717505					
Principality BS 01222 344188					

THIRD TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bank of Ireland 0800 833937					
Allied Trust Bank 0171 62608079					
Cheltenham & Glouc 0800 717505					
Principality BS 01222 344188					

FOURTH TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bank of Ireland 0800 833937					
Allied Trust Bank 0171 62608079					
Cheltenham & Glouc 0800 717505					
Principality BS 01222 344188					

FIFTH TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bank of Ireland 0800 833937					
Allied Trust Bank 0171 62608079					
Cheltenham & Glouc 0800 717505					
Principality BS 01222 344188					

SIXTH TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bank of Ireland 0800 833937					
Allied Trust Bank 0171 62608079					
Cheltenham & Glouc 0800 717505					
Principality BS 01222 344188					

SEVENTH TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bank of Ireland 0800 833937					
Allied Trust Bank 0171 62608079					
Cheltenham & Glouc 0800 717505					
Principality BS 01222 344188					

EIGHTH TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bank of Ireland 0800 833937					
Allied Trust Bank 0171 62608079					
Cheltenham & Glouc 0800 717505					
Principality BS 01222 344188					

NINTH TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bank of Ireland 0800 833937					

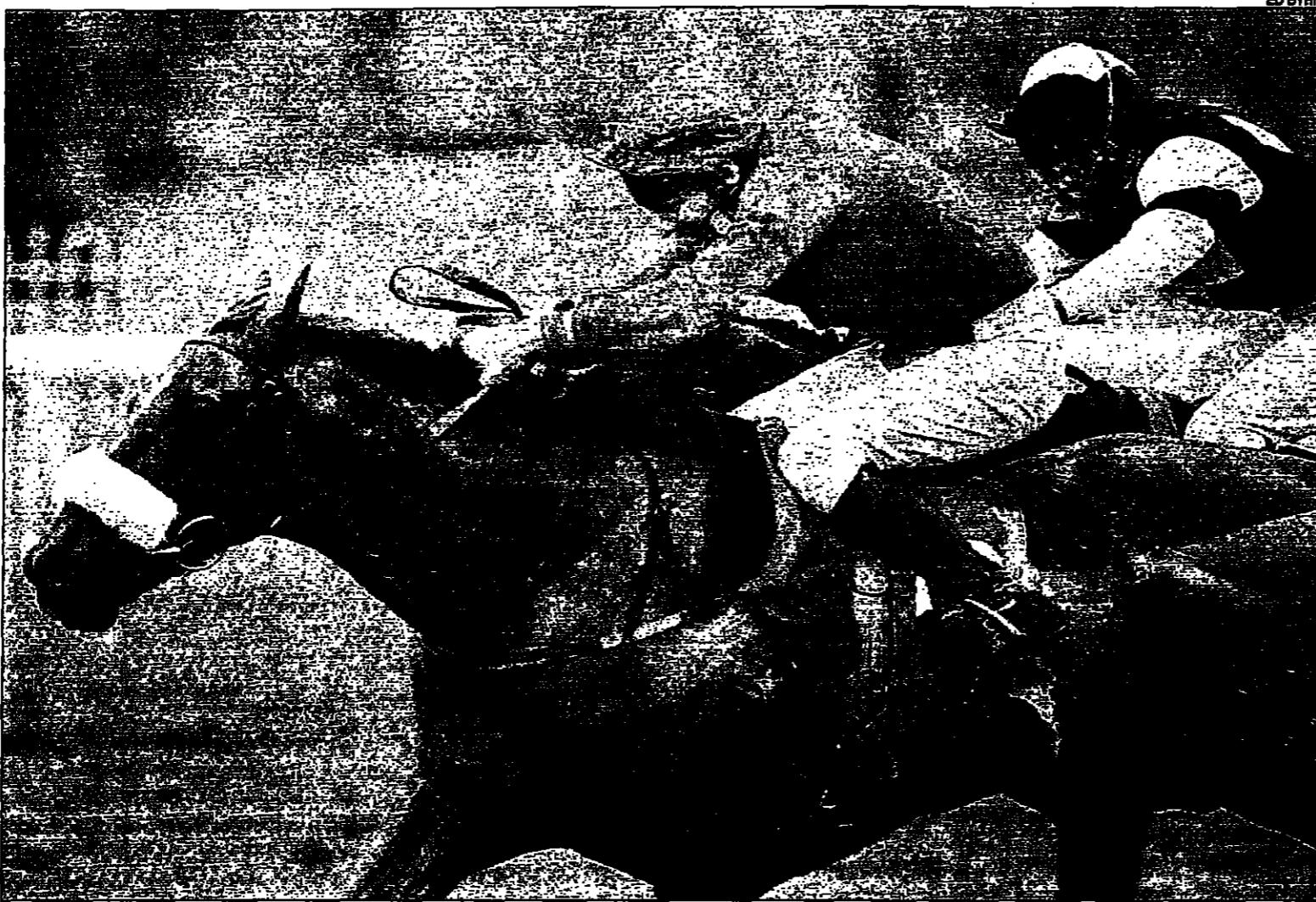
Talented Flat recruit can expose flaws in Agfa Hurdle opposition

Right Win to strengthen title claim

BY JULIAN MUSCAT

SO BEREFT of depth is the byzantine Champion Hurdle picture that the following have been brought together under the guise of a Festival trial: a German unknown, an equine veteran, a perennial big-race bridesmaid and, last but not least, in this designated test of speed, a French steeplechaser ironically trying to qualify for the Grand National. They are opposed — subject to Sandown passing a 7.30am inspection — by a group one winner from the Flat.

The Agfa Hurdle should really be no contest, although seasoned watchers of the winter game will be too wise to rush out and back Right Win with serious money. The effect



Trainglot, with Jamie Osborne aboard, attempts to repeat his 1993 victory in the Tote Bookmakers Handicap Hurdle at Sandown today

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: HIGH BARON (1.50 Sandown Park)
Next best: Treasure Again (4.10 Sandown Park)

that eight flights of hurdles can have on a proven galloper never ceases to amaze.

Indeed, had Right Win displayed a shade more consistency on the Flat, he would now be looking over the frosty landscape from the comforts of a stallion box. He may yet earn that status, but the six-year-old entrie must first scramble over a series of wooden obstacles which, if he measures them inaccurately, might have painful repercussions.

That seems unlikely if his jumping debut is any guide. Perhaps, mindful of the hidden pitfalls, Right Win cleared his hurdles with room to spare, in the process demolishing a field of talented novices. Having initially loitered along at the back of the field, his superior speed was quickly evident. The prize was his in a matter of strides.

Land Afar was well held by Mole Board until the 14-year-old, all wrong at the final flight, fired Tom Grantham out of the saddle 12 months ago. It would be hugely embarrassing for his opponents were Mole Board to prevail on ground much faster than he.

The going is also a problem for his stablemate, Killone Abbot, who ploughed through a quagmire at Newbury for an emphatic victory in November. He is talented, but his future surely lies over fences.

Richard Dunwoody, who takes over on Atours, will be mindful of this. Atours is usually held off the pace, often exaggeratedly so, but it would be foolish to allow Right Win such rope. So impressive in dismissing inferior opponents, Atours has never quite convinced against his peers. They are hoping As Des Carres earns the handicapper's wrath: only then will the eight-year-old be assured a berth in Cheltenham. And further races at Wincanton and Newbury

weights for which are announced on Tuesday.

The British Horseracing Board acted yesterday to make good a host of valuable opportunities recently lost to the weather. The Marstons pedigree Novices' Hurdle, run at Uttoxeter a week today, is to have its added value boosted to £18,000 to compensate for the abandonment of the Prestige Novices' Hurdle to a taxi traffic. Like racehorse ownership in the present climate, it is a frustrating waste of time and money.

will have their values increased if the card at Sandown today succumbs to the elements.

In that event, spare a thought for the lot of the British racehorse owner. He is, by definition, not short of a few bob. But no one, however affluent, has found the antedote to being stuck in a taxi traffic. Like racehorse ownership in the present climate, it is a frustrating waste of time and money.

Sandown hopes rise

PROSPECTS for the Agfa Diamond Chase meeting at Sandown Park today have improved, thanks to a rise in temperature. The clerk of the course, Andrew Cooper, said yesterday: "We didn't have too bad a frost overnight and the temperature has risen to around two degrees Celsius at the moment."

"It all depends on how things are tonight. There isn't a really bad frost forecast but we will have a precautionary inspection at 9.00am on Sunday."

Hopes are high that today's meeting at Wetherby will go ahead but it was a different story at Cheltenham, where the meeting at Warwick on Tuesday is dependent on a thaw as some parts of the track are still frozen.

The clerk of the course,

SANDOWN PARK

THUNDERER
1.20 PADDY'S RETURN (nap) 3.00 Atours
1.50 Martin's Lamp 3.35 Young Hustler
2.25 Jibber The Kibber 4.40 Whattabob

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 4.10 PHARANEAR.

GOING: GOOD, GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES
7.30AM INSPECTION

1.20 RIPLEY FOUR-YEAR-OLD NOVICES' HURDLE
(6.935; 2m 110yd) (16 runners)

1 31/2/93 MARTINS LAMP 21 (G.5) (M) (F) (J. Brougham) 11-8 C. Llewellyn 66
2 11/1 PADDY'S RETURN 21 (G.5) (M) (F) (Tom Doherty) 11-8 R. Dunwoody 66
3 11/10 JIBBER THE KIBBER 21 (G.5) (M) (F) (Tom Doherty) 11-8 K. Held 77
4 1 MASTINGUETT 21 (D.5) (M) (D) (G. Osborne) 11-3 C. Llewellyn 66
5 2 11/10 TALAAZ 21 (G.5) (M) (F) (Tom Doherty) 11-8 C. Llewellyn 66
6 3 11/10 MASTINGUETT 21 (D.5) (M) (F) (Tom Doherty) 11-8 C. Llewellyn 66
7 4 11/10 MR CHRISTIE 21 (D.5) (M) (L. Scolari) 11-8 G. Stedman 66
8 5 11/10 RIBBLETON 21 (D.5) (M) (F) (Tom Doherty) 11-8 M. Nichols 66
9 6 11/10 NAUTICAL JEWEL 21 (D.5) (M) (F) (Tom Doherty) 11-8 G. Stedman 66
10 7 11/10 SALEP 17 (F) (S) (D) (P. Murphy) 11-0 P. Niven 67
11 8 11/10 TALAAZ 17 (F) (D) (M. Hammond) 11-0 J. Ryan 68
12 9 11/10 GREENWICH LADY 19 (G.5) (M) (F) (Tom Doherty) 11-3 D. Birtwistle 68
13 10 11/10 CULTURAL CON 18 (F) (M) (P. McMillan) 11-0 J. O'Connor 68
14 11 11/10 DEBUTANTE DAYS 19 (F) (M) (P. McMillan) 11-0 J. Tolley 68
15 12 11/10 MASTINGUETT 18 (F) (M) (P. McMillan) 11-0 J. O'Connor 68
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Wembley
passes by
as Lowes
heads for
Bradford

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

JAMES LOWES forfeited the possibility of a third trip to Wembley with Leeds by moving to Bradford yesterday. As the hooker's transfer is beyond the deadline for the Silk Cut Challenge Cup, he must sit out the home match against Barley, one of 11 rearranged fourth-round ties tomorrow.

Mick Shaw once again takes up the acting half duties for Leeds at Swinton. Lowes, a prodigious worker, found himself increasingly cast in a defensive role in the second row. His work-rate was sufficient for Leeds to tempt him with a fresh contract but Bradford's plans left Lowes in no doubt about where his future lay.

Brian Smith, the Bradford coach, said Lowes would be his automatic choice as No 9, ahead of two other utility players, Bernard Dwyer and Jason Donohue. The latter will play at hooker for the Batley game.

Smith is convinced Lowes can succeed Lee Jackson, now in Australia, as the Great Britain hooker. "When the Bradford chairman visited me in Australia, he left me a tape of Bradford v Leeds," Smith said. "There was one player who impressed me most. Unfortunately, he was playing for the opposition. I've kept an eye on James at Leeds ever since."

Although Leeds were anxious to retain Lowes, Smith apparently sees more in him and Paul Cook, the teenage England wing exchanged by Leeds in December, than the coaching staff at Headingley. In contrast to a procession of more than 30 players in and out of Odsal since the arrival of Smith six months ago, playing resources at Leeds are wearing thin.

The deal for Lowes appears to conclude the spending spree at Bradford. With Glyn Tomlinson, the scrum half recruit from Barley, also signed, Smith will not get the chance to put his first-choice team into play before the Super League but with a straightforward passage to the last eight, the Challenge Cup offers an exciting prospect.

There is no doubt how much the competition means to Alex Murphy, in his and John Dornan's first match in charge of Warrington. They go to Oldham, semi-finalists last season, on the back of seven successive defeats.

The other all-Super League gives Shaun McRae his belated first sight of St Helens in action, at Castleford. Last week's postponement because of snow at least boosted the Australian coach's preparation time, but Ian Pickavance, Adam Fogerty and Joey Hayes picked up injuries. At stake is a tie at Rochdale or Thatto Head, the St Helens amateurs.

Wilson poised for Alnwick return

POINT-TO-POINT BY CARL EVANS

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Olympic sprint champion permitted to join Gunnell in Birmingham

Christie makes late dash for AAA championships

By DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

FOR the second time in seven months, British athletics officials have bent national championship rules to accommodate Linford Christie, the Olympic 100 metres champion. Christie's entry for the AAA of England indoor championships in Birmingham this weekend was received and accepted yesterday, although entries closed two weeks ago.

However, while it was wrong to allow Christie to run in the AAAs 100 metres final last summer, after his elimination in the heats, only a bureaucrat would disagree with the decision that he had "fallen in with his training".

The irony is that, after the pay dispute with Christie last summer, Britain's two Olympic champions are appearing for nothing in an unsponsored meeting. Sally Gunnell will be making her comeback from the injury which prevented her from defending her 400 metres hurdles world title last summer. She runs in the 400 metres.

Some of Gunnell's Great Britain colleagues for the Atlanta Olympics may be decided today, when the marathon selectors meet. The difficulty on the men's side is that they are spoilt for choice. "We have not been in such a strong position during all the time I have been involved, which is since the 1988 Olympic Games," Alan Warner, the chairman of selectors, said.

Five men are contesting three positions, and one option is to pick only Peter Whitehead now and wait until after the spring marathons before adding the other two names. Only Whitehead has indisputably achieved one of the four criteria which the British Athletics Federation (BAF) said would guarantee selection six months before the Games.

Whitehead was fourth at the world championships in Gothenburg, when conditions were warm and humid, which is what is expected in Atlanta, though much worse. According to BAF policy, a top-five position books an Olympic place.

The four other contenders are Richard Neurark, sev-

enth in the world championships and the 1993 World Cup winner; Eamonn Martin, the 1993 London winner and champion in Chicago in October; Paul Evans, second in New York in November; and Steve Brace, second in Houston last month.

There is little to choose between Martin, Evans and Brace from their most recent performances, while Neurark, though slower by four minutes, has shown up well in all the international championship marathons he has run. "We have to look at the ability of the athletes in difficult climatic conditions," Warner said, which suggests that Martin and Brace may be the unfortunate ones if the selectors fill all three places immediately.

It seems they might. "It has always been part of the policy to select early as far as possible," Warner said. However, should they do so, they could be embarrassed. Supposing a non-selected athlete becomes the first Briton since Tony Milovsorov in 1989 to break 2hr 10min? Evans, magnanimously given that Neurark has been injured recently, said yesterday that Whitehead and Neurark should be chosen, with the remainder settling the third-place argument in a spring marathon.

Not one British woman has attained the BAF standard for a guaranteed place, though choosing Liz McColgan would make sense. Karen Macleod, Marian Sutton and Suzanne Rigg have run qualifying times, but three into two will not go.



Gunnell goes indoors and sidesteps hurdles today on her comeback from injury

Williams set to take final step

By PHIL YATES

IT WAS, perhaps, inevitable that the Regal Welsh Open snooker tournament, a graveyard for life's games, established players this year, would throw up a first-time finalist. Mark Williams will enter uncharted territory when he plays over the best-of-17 frames for a first prize of £6,000.

Williams, 20, from Elbow

Valley, who more than compensates for his relative lack of tactical finesse by possessing a keen putting eye, yesterday added: "Dave Harold to his impressive list of victims at the event with a 6-1 victory."

The result, and more significantly, the cavalier manner in which it was achieved, will come as something of a surprise to Peter Ebdon, who voiced doubts about Williams's ability to capture the

against John Parrott or Paul Hunter, managed only one half-century, a run of 58 in the fifth frame.

He did, however, succeed in potting some potentially pivotal balls, none more so than in the third frame when, striking the cue-ball across the nap, he sank a difficult pink to a middle pocket to seal the frame 54-44 for a 3-0 advantage. Williams also passed an examination of nerve in the seventh by fashioning a yellow-to-pink clearance taking that frame 55-41.

What Peter said was rubbish, "Williams said. "I know I can keep playing like I did against him because I do it all the time in practice. It certainly wasn't a one-off, for sure. When I read in the papers what Peter had said, I just laughed."

Williams, who began the season occupying 39th position in the rankings but has now climbed to fourteenth on the provisional list, regardless of the outcome in the final

Neary makes television debut

By SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

AN EXCITING British prospect from Liverpool makes his first appearance on national television tonight. Sheena Neary, who is being hailed as a "white Nigel Benn", will be seen on ITV when he boxes at Everton Park sports centre.

Neary has been boxing as a light-welterweight for four years, but he is not known outside his home town. London promoters have tried without success to sign him.

Stephen Hyland, brother of John, who manages Neary, said: "No one has heard of Sheena because we've kept him out of the public eye, but tonight the country will see something special."

Neary has an unbeaten record in 15 contests and holds the Central Area title. Thirteen of his bouts have had quick endings. In his last contest, he

stopped the unbeaten Mark Richardson, of Guyana, in 130 seconds. Stephen Hyland said he did not believe anyone in Europe could stay the distance with Neary.

"No one wants to fight him," Hyland said. "We wanted to fight Paul Ryan, Ross Hale and Andy Holligan, but they wouldn't fight us. We asked the British Boxing Board of Control for a British title fight, but they gave us an eliminator with Bernard Paul. Then Paul pulled out."

Neary, born of Irish parents, is 27. He had an undistinguished amateur career and turned professional at the age of 23 after leaving the Army. He was with the King's Regiment and served in Belfast and the Falklands.

According to Hyland, Neary is a throw-back to the old days of boxing. He simply gets into the ring, gets the job done and gets out. "Doesn't go in for all that flashy stuff," Hyland said.

Neary's opponent will be Terry Souterland, an experienced American, from Cincinnati, who has a record of 19 wins out of 21, exposing their man in any way. "We are not in the business of kidding the public," Hyland said.

Also on the ITV programme, Matthew Ellis, the Amateur Boxing Association heavyweight champion and Britain's latest white hope, makes his professional debut. Also managed by John Hyland, Ellis, 21, is 15th 10lb and off 6ft, but is expected to scale 16 stone in a year or two and lift the British title.

Denial on Senna

Motor racing: Italian authorities yesterday denied reports that Frank Williams and Patrick Head, of the Williams Formula One team, were expected to be charged with manslaughter after the inquiry into the death of Ayrton Senna at the San Marino Grand Prix 21 months ago. An assistant to Maurizio Passarin, the Bologna prosecutor, said: "There has been no decision and no statement from the magistrate. These are all hypotheses that are being made but on the basis of nothing. They are just suppositions."

Alphand's third

Skating: Luc Alphand, of France, clinched his third World Cup downhill victory of the season in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, yesterday. Alphand clocked 1min 52.01sec in the first downhill on the Kandahar piste since Ulrike Maier, of Austria, was killed in a crash two years ago. Brian Stelmach, of Canada, was second in 1min 52.95sec, with Peter Runggaldier, of Italy, third, 0.01sec behind.

Select band

Cycling: Great Britain will take 19 riders to the Olympic Games in Atlanta, three more than went to Barcelona in 1992. Eight have been pre-selected, including Chris Boardman, who will compete in the time-trial.

Elsworth: Ghofer advice

By CARL EVANS

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Saturday portrait: Rory Underwood, by Simon Barnes

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE MARTIN

Part-time hero ready to take wing from England rugby jet set

I once set eyes on a bird that was thought to be the only example of its species still living. It was a weird moment: heavy with the past and full of disturbing implications about the future. I had the same sort of feeling when I spoke to Rory Underwood this week.

Perhaps nobody ever again will collect 82 rugby union caps for England, 83 when he runs out against Wales at Twickenham this afternoon. Perhaps nobody else will score 48 tries for England, plus another for the British Isles against New Zealand. Underwood holds the England record in both areas.

Mere excellence, however, is not the reason why one must ponder on the possible extinction of the Underwood species: must celebrate the fact that Underwood is a living fossil, a throw-back. It is the fact that he has another life. Most international rugby players have a life beyond training and playing, but increasingly these things are sports related. Their rugby eminence is, more and more, as time passes and rewards increase, a fact of their professional lives.

Underwood, of course, is in the Royal Air Force. England's flying wing. When not scoring tries, diving pell-mell to touch down one-handed in the corner through a hedge of hostile bodies, he was howling through Scotland at zero feet, keeping the world safe for democracy. It was all too comic-book to be true, but it was fact. Dashing pilot-officer, dashing wing. He was, and is, the finisher, the sniffer, the man who appeared from nowhere to make the difference between victory and defeat. A touch of the Linekers about him, but more a *Boy's Own Paper* hero brought to life.

It is true that the RAF gave him plenty of time off to train: the Services are not blind to the kudos from sporting achievement. But the point about Underwood was that his was no grace-and-favour job. It was real. The fact is that the RAF spent three or four million pounds to train me, so I am a very large asset in those terms," he said. The words are spoken matter-of-

factly, but the quiet pride is obvious.

Yet as rugby moves, lurching, staggering and blinking hard, into the harsh light of modern professional sport, so standards and expectations rise. The rugby stars of the future will not be spending a third of their lives, or half their lives, on the game. Rugby will be all their lives, and nobody invests four million pounds on a man who has his being elsewhere, still less let him roar about the stratosphere with equipment that costs the National Debt.

"I think that's right," Underwood said. "I don't know if anyone else will be able to do it. It was always a very hard double to bring off, and it is harder now that I have a family."

Underwood is 32, with two

The speed and appetite remain strong. It is not his legs but his time that has gone'

daughters, aged three and five. There is not much further to go as an active sportsman. One hundred caps? "It would take three years. I don't think it is possible," he said. He has already retired once, in 1992, so he is not making any predictions about a second and necessarily final retirement.

For he is still fast. He last did a speed test before the World Cup, and was as fast as ever. He can have a bad game — a career of 12 years cannot but be sprinkled with bad games here and there — but he resists any suggestion that his "legs have gone".

It is his time that has gone, or almost. There was that strange moment, in the autumn international against South Africa at Twickenham, when he and his captain, Will Carling, performed a ludicrous sort of "ladies' excuse-me" with the ball, allowing Chester Williams to score. With that

rather awful try, there was a faint but perceptible air of an era coming to an end.

That there was a backlog of disappointment from that World Cup defeat — trouncing — by New Zealand in the semi-final is undeniable. Underwood admits it, talks about a fresh start, a new season, and anyway getting to the semi-finals was pretty damn good. He is still fast, the appetite for the strife still strong. But for many people, that transition from wild twenties to sober thirties is the biggest leap in a lifetime. Underwood no longer flies aeroplanes for a living. He has taken a ground-instruction job at RAF Cranwell. "Weird," he said, more than once. "I've got my own office, and a desk and a computer, and I can go and get my own pencils. Weird. But there's a ground job waiting for everybody. Isn't there?"

All this is effortlessly English: quiet confidence behind quiet self-deprecation. And 82 caps, and the flying — serving, he says — and playing. Serving England in the RAF, playing for England. England, Rory's England.

But those cheek-bones. They are about as English as the cheek-bones of Genghis Khan. They are certainly much stranger than the hint of Asia in the eyes. Underwood is the son of a Yorkshire engineer who worked in Malaysia and married a Chinese-Malay woman named Annie.

Underwood lived in Malaysia

until he was 14, and remembers

endless football in the tropical

warmth, always one-on-one with

his brother, Gary. The younger

brother, Tony, kept getting left out,

brothers being brothers. "It's hard

to think of a bad memory about

Malaysia," he said. Then it was

back to England for schooling, but

his father continued to work in

Malaysia while Annie kept the

family together in Yorkshire.

Underwood is half-Asian, but

almost wholly English. The Eng-

lish part is dominant in me," he

said. "That's not the case with

either of my brothers. I'm very

proud of my roots, but I'm more

English than them. Probably

something to do with being in the

Air Force." Underwood will keep

on "flying a desk" for the RAF until

2001: a date at once remote and

horrifyingly close. After that, who

knows? But not rugby. "When I

retire from the game, I will retire

across the board," he said.

He would like to captain his

club, Leicester, for a season before

he calls it a day and, after that,

simply carry on playing for Eng-

land for as long as he is playing

well. In a changing game, his

appetite remains constant and

keen. "I'm not staying in the game

for money that's now available,"

he said. "It's nice to get it, of

course, but it doesn't make any

difference to the desire to play.

When I think of retirement, I feel

sorry for the players in other

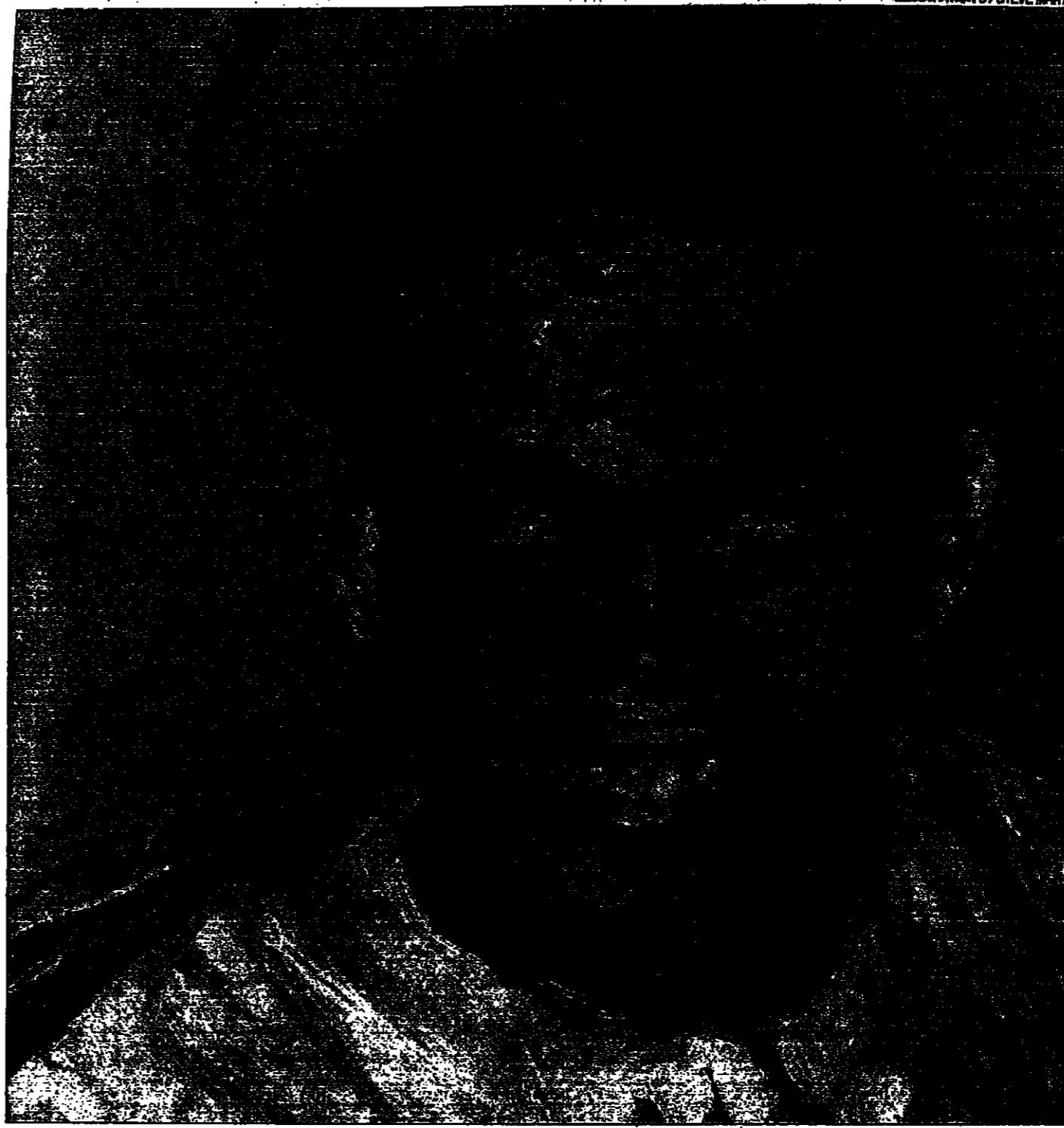
sports who are full-time sportsmen

and nothing else. When they

retire, they have nothing else to

turn to."

The rugby players that follow



Long-hitting Open champion proves his short game is sweet in Heineken Classic

Daly produces display of iron will

FROM JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT
IN PERTH

PAUL McGINLEY and John Daly are as different as Guinness and oysters. McGinley drinks. Daly smokes, often lighting up during a round of golf. McGinley abhors the habit. Daly smokes, averagely long off the tee. Daly stupendously so. McGinley's coal-black hair frames a 240-watt smile; Daly is fair-skinned and fair-haired.

What they have in common here, as well as the habit of not wearing any head covering against the temperatures approaching 110F, is that

McGinley's 68 and — even more so — Daly's 67 were among the most significant scores on the second day of the Heineken Classic at The Vines, near Perth. McGinley moved to share second place with Dean Robertson, three strokes behind Wayne Smith and one stroke ahead of Daly, the Open champion.

If anything, it was even hotter than on the first day. A small blessing for McGinley, 29, was that he started his round at 7.30am and had just about finished by the time the sun was overhead and at its fiercest. His play, particularly the crisp and accurate iron play, gladdened the heart of the engaging Dubliner. "I

played sensible and solid," he said, summing up his performance with a broad smile.

After two good rounds, which put him seven under par, it was no surprise to hear McGinley extol the condition of this course. After all, players tend to criticise courses only when they have scored badly. But it was a surprise to hear him rate it above both Portmarnock, where he competed in the 1991 Walker Cup, and Mount Juliet, the lovingly-tended site of the past three Irish Opens.

The fairways, bunkers and greens are the best conditioned I have ever played on," McGinley said. Since he spent nearly five years competing on the best American courses while he was at college in San Diego, that is saying something. "When you play courses of such high quality, then it has to be good for your game."

The wind had swung

around overnight, making the par-72, 7,100-yard course play even harder. McGinley, however, made light of it, just as Daly was to do later in the day. He had five birdies and made only two mistakes — ballooning a six-iron into a bunker, which cost him a stroke on the 14th, and missing the green on the 1st.

Daly's self-control has been

questioned so often in the past,

it is worth recording that for

the second day he totally

refrained from using woods. "It's the first time in my life I've hit irons for 36 holes," Daly said. He was tempted once or twice but wisely used the long irons with which he can hit the ball so far. "He's 40 yards longer than me with a driver," Ian Woosnam said. "He hits his one-iron as far as I hit my driver."

Jack Nicklaus made an acute observation about Daly recently when he watched the Open champion play one of those deft shots around the green for which he is not fully recognised. "But for his short game," Nicklaus said, "John Daly would be just another long hitter. There are plenty of those in the US."

Daly does, indeed, have the touch of a surgeon on and around the greens, as he demonstrated when he singed the 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th. On this last hole he sank a 75ft putt, striking it with such force it smacked into the back of the hole and jumped into the air.

Twice he saved par with deft shots when he was off the putting surface and only a few feet from the flag, but as much as four feet below the hole. On the 13th, he hit a high pitch close to the pin on the 17th he chose to run an eight-iron up the bank and he did it so accurately that the ball dipped the side of the hole before stopping two feet away.

The last hole of his round at Pebble Beach, where he hit his second shot into the back of a hazard.

The Yorkshireman was back in the fitness trailer before starting his second round at Poppy Hills. "I was close to pulling out before the first round because of a painful back but it has eased considerably," he said.

Sandy Lyle was also happy after his round of 70, which confirmed that he is on the way back. The Scot is now an impressive 27 under par for the ten rounds he has played since rejoining the US PGA Tour last month.

NICK FALDO was seeking slide-rule accuracy with his putter when he resumed his challenge for the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am under cloudy skies on the Monterey Peninsula here yesterday.

He twice missed putts from

inside three feet in an opening

round of 69, which cost him a share of the lead held by two Americans, Justin Leonard and John Elliott.

Faldo, who played his opening

round on the Poppy Hills

course, returned to tournament

headquarters at Pebble Beach for a two-hour session on the practice green, where he used a metal ruler to line up

his putts. The former Open

and US Masters champion

placed his ball at the tip of the yard-long ruler and recovered

well with the help of four birdies. "They kept me in the

tournament and now it is up to

me to make the most of it," he said.

Howard Clark, who was in

fourteenth place alongside

Faldo, would also have shared

the lead had he not had a six at

the last hole of his round at

Pebble Beach, where he hit his

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hazard.

the last hole of his round at

Scotland face step up in class

France prepare to return to their traditional game

By MARK SOUSTER

WHILE it is premature to consider the 68th meeting between Scotland and France at Murrayfield this afternoon as a grand slam decider, the Royal Bank of Scotland international is likely to be the defining match of the five nations' tournament this season. After both countries won their opening games, whoever emerges triumphant this afternoon will have a huge part to play in the outcome of the championship.

Scotland know not to read too much into the manner of France's defeat of England, although they would be right to consider its implications. Having finally laid to rest the England bogey in the 'five nations', France, under Jean-Claude Skrela and Jo Maso, can concentrate on reintroducing a dash of brio into their game. As Philippe Saint-André, their captain, said this week, he and France have a mental picture of how rugby should be played. Today, the canvas is again blank; whether the 67,000 crowd will see a masterpiece or a pastiche remains to be seen.

France must decide beforehand their battle-plan: they, and Thierry Lacroix in particular, must be wary of being caught in two minds. Yesterday, they were talking of a return to their finest traditions.

The omens are good. The sides invariably bring out the best in each other, the games in Paris and Pretoria last year were classics and the outcome this afternoon is likely to be equally close — too close to call.

Against England, France proved that, when necessary, they can jettison the flamboy-

ant and bumptious grind it with the best. New Scotland included. Pragmatism and self-discipline have been introduced to an awesome pack. They are, as Jim Telfer, the Scotland manager, said yesterday, the same size as Ireland's eight — that is half a stone heavier per man than Scotland — but these similarities end. They are a fearsome unit, although, if they lack one element, it is mobility and that is the area Scotland will try to exploit.

The Scots will not want to be dragged into a stamina-sapping war of attrition. Rather, they will look to rely on the fast-rucking and quick posses-

FIVE NATIONS



sion that served them so well in Ireland and that allowed Redpath and Townsend to dictate events. That is easier said than done, though, and France will not be as accomodating as the Irish.

Scotland can draw strength, and encouragement, not only from the performance in Dublin, but also those two games last year and an impressive record against France at Murrayfield, where they have won only once since 1978.

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Against England, France proved that, when necessary, they can jettison the flamboy-

SCOTLAND

R J Shepherd (Metros); C A Joiner (Metros); S Hastings (Watsonians); I C Jardine (Stirling County); M Dods (Northampton); G P J Townsend (Northampton); B W Redpath (Metros); D I W Hilton (Bath); K D McDonald (Stirling County); P H Wright (Boroughmuir); R I Wainwright (Watsonians, capt); S J Campbell (Dundee HSP); G W Weir (Newcastle); I R Smith (Gloucester); E W Peters (Bath). Referee: C Thomas (Wales). Kick-off: 3pm. TV coverage: BBC1. Replacements: 16 K M Logan (String Co); 17 C M Chalmers (Bogie-Borodale); 18 S Gies (Methvenians); 19 G McAllister (Newcastle); 20 S Murray (Edin Acadie); 21 A P Burnell (London Scottish); 21 J A Hay (Hawick).

FRANCE

15 J-L Sadiou (Colombes); 14 E Niemiec (Toulouse); 13 A Penat (Brest); 12 T Coste (Aude); 11 P Saint-André (Moudou, capt); 10 T Lacoste (Dax); 9 P Carbonnier (Toulouse); 1 M Pélissé (Toulon); 2 J-M González (Bayonne); 3 C Celliato (Toulouse); 4 A Benazzi (Agen); 5 O Marie (Montauban); 6 D Roura (Dax); 7 L Cauvin (Toulouse); 8 F Pélissé (Dax).

Kick-off: 3pm. TV coverage: BBC1.

Replacements: 18 P Bonnaud (Bogie-Borodale); 19 S Gies (Methvenians); 20 S Murray (Edin Acadie); 21 L Bérenger (Toulouse); 22 L Bérenger (Racing); 23 M de Rougemont (Toulon); 24 L Bérenger (Racing).

Referee: C Thomas (Wales). Kick-off: 3pm. TV coverage: BBC1.

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EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP: Semi-final

SPORT

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 3 1996

Wales reliant on innocence of youth for expansive game



The ghostly figures of the Wales forwards run through a lineout drill in preparation for meeting England at Twickenham this afternoon. Photograph: Marc Aspland

Time for England to perform

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THERE is a seductive argument that suggests that there could be no better time than at Twickenham today for England to start playing the rugby of the Nineties to which they are said to aspire: the all-conquering 1995 five nations' victors at home to Wales, whitewashed in the championship a year ago.

The relative positions of the countries could not be more black and white, save for the significant changes that have affected rugby in the past ten months. As well as rugby union's philosophy, those changes apply to personnel, many of whom have been through the grinder of the World Cup last summer.

In England's case, that tournament marked the conclusion of some distinguished careers and brought demands for a more expansive game. In the case of Wales, they, too, have lost experienced players and have their third team management in less than a year.

Talking new-era rugby is one thing — playing it quite another. At least England, somewhat late in the day, have begun to get their minds around what is required, and that mental shift is significant. Wales remain the more innate rugby players and there is nothing that they would like more than to pick up the pieces of an error-strewn approach with which England are uncomfortable.

When the England squad came together last weekend, the players discussed in detail the style that they wanted to adopt. A variety of reasons

sullied their approach to the pre-Christmas games with South Africa and Western Samoa, and, against France, two weeks ago, they reverted to the game that had been successful in Paris since 1988.

Whether their honesty session will bear instant fruit will only be seen in the 102nd meeting of the countries this afternoon, but they seem more at ease now — and, if unusually severe training at Roehampton yesterday was any guide, determined not to compound defeat to France by losing to a nation that has not won at Twickenham since 1988.

No player has suffered more from the post-World Cup trauma than Mike Catt. A year ago, international rugby

seemed easy; now, the "strike runner" at full back has

become a blunt instrument in a back division that has lost coherence. At the same time, his co-tenants in the back three have changed, with the introduction to the right wing first of Damian Hopley, then Jon Sleightholme, and a new pair of half backs have been assimilated. "I think the criticism has been unfair," Catt said. "If the opportunities had been there and I mess up, it would have been different, but they haven't been."

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they can't stop him. "If we choose to have him on the bench, that's our decision."

There have been suggestions that Crystal Palace supporters might attempt to stir things up by infiltrating the ground, but with 16,500 tickets in a capacity crowd going to United supporters, Cantona will have plenty of support.

Birmingham City will have to play a home match behind closed doors if their supporters step out of line this year. The club was found guilty by the Football Association of two misconduct charges arising from crowd disturbances during the game against Millwall at St Andrew's in November. The punishment has been suspended until December 31.

McManaman role, page 42
Robson's choice, page 43



Howley, left, and Thomas, the Wales half backs, in relaxed mood during training at Sandhurst yesterday

FIVE NATIONS'



CHAMPIONSHIP

"We have players who are among the best in the world at what they do. We have to get the ball to Will [Carling] and Jerry [Guscott], and as a back three we are hungry for possession. I'm not going to do anything silly and get caught in my own half all the time, but I want to try things. I want to be more adventurous."

"I'm a better runner with the ball than I am a kicker

anyway, while Wales have some new faces with nothing to lose. If they want to play an expansive game, that could be good fun." Good fun? Is this a professional rugby player speaking? If it is, thank heaven for someone who is not weighed down by the "responsibilities" of sport.

Kevin Bowring, the Wales coach, has spoken of the need for players to be aware of how much it costs to support the national team in this day and age. "The style that suits our young players is an expansive one and, if we can produce that, it will entertain the public too," Bowring said. He might even remember the youth of the Wales team that came together in 1969 — two 20-year-olds in J P R Williams and Keith Jarrett, Gareth Edwards at 21, Mervyn Davies at 22. They turned out to be half-decent players.

Yet he cannot but be aware of the physical challenge posed by England and, in particular, by the big back row forwards, who will come running into the midfield occupied by lost libb if he is to be believed" Arwel Thomas.

"The challenge is to stop

players like Rodber, knock him backwards or move him around the field." Bowring said. "Arwel's a very brave player. He proved himself last year, playing for Neath against the South Africans two years ago."

More to the point, however, Thomas is a footballing stand-off, light on his feet, cool of brain; his selection is triumph for instinct as against modern methodology as represented by Neil Jenkins.

Can this Wales team give him the chance to express his talents? The memory of Italy unravelling the Wales midfield during the final quarter of their game in Cardiff last month remains fresh. "We stopped talking to each other when we got to 3-3 and nearly lost," Jonathan Humphreys, Wales' chirpy captain, said. In a similar position at Twickenham, Humphreys and his colleagues would be screaming their heads off.

However, what Italy could do, a fair more experienced and heavily-favoured England should also be able to achieve. Matt Dawson and Paul Grayson, their half backs, have it in them to play very far more than the game plan required in Paris, and now is the time for them to do so.

Kick-off: 3pm. TV coverage: BBC1. Replacements: 15 J E B Caledon (Bath), 17 P R de Glanville (Bath), 18 K P P Bracken (Bristol), 19 V E Ugochi (Bath), 20 R G R Dave (Bath), 21 D Richards (Leicester).

Replacements: 16 G Thomas (Cardiff), 17 N R Jenkins (Pontypridd), 18 A P Moore (Cardiff), 19 S Williams (Neath), 20 L Musson (Cardiff), 21 G R Jenkins (Swansea).

Underwood portrait, page 46

Scots' central figure, page 47

Women's alternative, page 47

TODAY'S TEAMS AT TWICKENHAM

ENGLAND

M J Catt (Bath)
J M Sleightholme (Bath)
W D C Carling (Harlequins, capt)
J C Guscott (Bath)
R Underwood (Leicester/RAF)
P J Grayson (Northampton)
M J Dawson (Northampton)
G C Rowntree (Leicester)
M P Regan (Bristol)
J Leonard (Harlequins)
T A Rodber (Northampton/Army)
M O Johnson (Leicester)
M C Balford (Northampton)
L B N Daftago (Wasps)
B B Clarke (Bath)
Rat K W McCartney (Scotland)

Replacements: 15 J E B Caledon (Bath), 17 P R de Glanville (Bath), 18 K P P Bracken (Bristol), 19 V E Ugochi (Bath), 20 R G R Dave (Bath), 21 D Richards (Leicester).

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Underwood portrait, page 46

Scots' central figure, page 47

Women's alternative, page 47

WALES

W J L Thomas (Llanelli)
I C Evans (Llanelli)
L B Davies (Neath)
N G Davies (Llanelli)
W T Proctor (Llanelli)
A C Thomas (Bristol)
R Howley (Bridgend)
A L P Lewis (Cardiff)
J D Humphreys (Cardiff, capt)
J D Davies (Neath)
E W Lewis (Cardiff)
G O Llewellyn (Neath)
D Jones (Cardiff)
R G Jones (Llanelli)
H T Taylor (Cardiff)

Kick-off: 3pm. TV coverage: BBC1.

Replacements: 16 G Thomas (Cardiff), 17 N R Jenkins (Pontypridd), 18 A P Moore (Cardiff), 19 S Williams (Neath), 20 L Musson (Cardiff), 21 G R Jenkins (Swansea).

Underwood portrait, page 46

Scots' central figure, page 47

Women's alternative, page 47

Security fears dominating build-up for World Cup

By SIMON WILDE

ENGLAND'S 14-man party leaves London for Lahore this evening with hopes that the cricket World Cup will pass off smoothly on the sub-continent, looking more or less like ever. The organisers have confirmed they will decide by tomorrow whether the four matches scheduled for Sri Lanka can go ahead.

Jagmohan Dalmiya, the convenor of the organising committee, Pilcom, said that he had been in touch with cricket officials in Sri Lanka, where a suicide bomber in Colombo killed more than 70 people on Wednesday, but wanted more time to assess the situation.

"I have requested the International Cricket Council and the Australian Cricket Board to give in until Sunday to decide whether matches in Sri Lanka can go ahead," he said. He refused to confirm reports that Pilcom was making contingency plans to move Sri Lanka's four matches to India and Pakistan.

"It's too early to say anything, nothing has been sorted out, but we are obviously very concerned at the development.

Letters

ments in Sri Lanka," he added. Officials at the Wankhede Stadium, in Mumbai, said that the match between Sri Lanka and Australia, scheduled for Colombo on February 17, could be played at the ground.

Australian players and officials are considering forfeiting the match if the venue remains in Sri Lanka and may even pull their side out of the tournament altogether. The Australian board meets early next week and will then discuss the matter with the players, who will be at a training camp in Brisbane.

The England players will be advised not to leave their hotels in either Karachi or Peshawar. John Barclay, the tour manager, will be in regular touch with the local British High Commissions about security during the tournament. He has also sought the guidance of Mike Vockins, the manager of the recent England A tour to Pakistan. The Pakistan interior minister, Naseerullah Babar, said

West Indies, Zimbabwe and Kenya are also due to play matches in Sri Lanka. Zimbabwe and Kenya officials have said their teams are happy to do so; West Indies officials are monitoring developments closely.

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Skeletons in Republican's cupboard include ploys to avoid tax and Vietnam War

Forbes image loses lustre under glare of media scrutiny

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

STEVE FORBES'S free ride is over. Having built up the multimillionaire publisher to enliven the Republican presidential race, the American media has begun subjecting him to serious scrutiny.

Yesterday *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* published long biographical articles on this improbable candidate which contained flattering disclosures about his avoidance of the Vietnam War, his exploitation of tax loopholes, the unsavoury records of some of his advisers, and his flamboyant father's homosexual traits.

Newsweek and *The New York Times* have chipped in

with awkward disclosures about Mr Forbes's pre-campaign settlement of his secretary's age-discrimination complaint and curious campaign finance arrangements. The Federal Election Commission is examining possibly illegal corporate contributions from Forbes Inc, the company he chairs.

In another development yesterday, the White House said that President Clinton had rebuked Richard Morris, his political guru, for secretly sending private polling data to Robert Dole, the Republican frontrunner whose lead Mr Forbes is rapidly eroding. Mr Morris told the Senate leader's difficult decisions.

Having drawn a high draft number during the Vietnam War, he "carefully chose to minimise his chances of going... by joining the National Guard" long before he had to. As second-in-command of Forbes Inc, he had failed to act on reports that his father was "propositioning male staffers". He has also "embraced political experts known for negative advertising and ex-

ploring themes of race and homosexuality to win elections".

The *Washington Post* noted that Mr Forbes had "spent his entire life nestled in the world of his family's wealth created for him", rarely venturing beyond the affluent area of New Jersey where he was raised. It suggested that he toned down articles in *Forbes* magazine

critical of friends and advertisers, and cited profligacy during his one government job as head of Radio Free Europe.

It disclosed that he saves \$900,000 (£596,000) a year on property taxes on his 520-acre New Jersey estate by breeding cattle on the land qualities for the state's farmland preservation programme. *Newsweek* reported that in 1991 Mr

Forbes dismissed his long-serving personal secretary three weeks before his 65th birthday then quietly settled his age discrimination claim before launching his presidential candidacy.

The New York Times reported that Mr Forbes was loaning not giving, his campaign millions of dollars, which meant that he could recoup some or all of his investment if public funding took off.

Sooner or later Mr Forbes's refusal to release his income tax returns is bound to become a significant issue. His father was a master of legal tax avoidance, and his opponents believe a revelation of similar practices by this immensely wealthy candidate could seriously damage his campaign.

Clinton faces subpoena

Washington: Just one week after Hillary Clinton's subpoenaed appearance before a federal grand jury, President Clinton faces a possible subpoena to testify in an Arkansas fraud trial (Martin Fletcher writes).

Susan McDougal, one of the Clintons' partners in the Whitewater Development Corporation, has asked a federal judge in Little Rock

to compel the President to testify when her trial begins next month. Mrs McDougal's estranged husband, James, the Clintons' other Whitewater partner and a co-defendant, is also attempting to obtain the President's testimony without resorting to a subpoena. Mr Clinton declined to comment "because I don't know what the facts are".

America accused of aiding arms shipments to Bosnia

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

OVER the past three years, Saudi Arabia is reported to have funded a \$300 million (£200 million) covert operation to channel weapons to the Muslim-led Government in Bosnia-Herzegovina with the implicit co-operation of the United States.

In direct contravention of a United Nations arms embargo which Washington had guaranteed to enforce, a senior Saudi official has said his country shipped arms to the Bosnian state both through Croatia and on board secret night flights to the northern city of Tuzla.

Deliveries of arms from the Middle East, particularly Iran, were long known about in intelligence circles. At the height of the conflict both Britain and France felt America may have smoothed the way for a series of mysterious aircraft spotted by UN peace-keepers landing at Tuzla. An Iranian 747 loaded with weap-

ons was discovered at Zagreb airport in 1994, and shipments through Croatian hands were routine with their forces taking a share. But the Administration has always suggested Turkey may have been responsible in helping deliveries across its airspace.

In Washington this week Lord Owen, the former European Union negotiator in the Bosnian conflict, said he believed America had been involved in a covert arms programme but said he could not prove it.

For the first time last year, it was suggested America may have given its tacit approval to the Iranian deliveries, a matter strenuously denied by a White House which suggested again yesterday it was both "preposterous and insulting" to say that Washington had done anything more than turn a blind eye. Nevertheless, a senior White House official made little attempt at denial.

America has already asked Saudi Arabia and a number of other moderate Islamic countries to contribute to a new programme to train and equip the Bosnian armed forces.



Steve Forbes, the multimillionaire publisher, greets a supporter from his campaign bus in Council Bluffs, Iowa

Congress orders TV clean-up

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

AMERICAN parents may soon filter all undesirable violence and sex from their children's television screens in the wake of a landmark Bill passed by Congress which will transform the communications industry.

Broadcasters welcomed provisions in the legislation regulating their industry. However, they had one bitter pill to swallow: new television sets with 13-inch screens or larger will have to carry the so-called V-chip allowing parents to block unsuitable viewing. The Telecommuni-

cations Bill is expected to be approved by President Clinton within a week.

Executives at the largest networks said they were pleased with the wide scope of the Bill but, with civil liberties groups, said they were likely to oppose the V-chip in court on First Amendment grounds.

Civil liberties groups also vowed an immediate court battle over provisions that would block the transmission of smut over the Internet. Those who knowingly transmit electronic information deemed "indecent to minors"

Internet betrays virtual affair

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN NEW YORK

A MAN claims to have been cuckolded via the Internet and is seeking a divorce, citing his wife's computer line "affair".

Diane Goydan sent increasingly affectionate e-mail messages from her New Jersey home to a correspondent who signed himself "The Weasel".

He, sitting at his computer keyboard in North Carolina, responded eagerly. Although they had not met, they arranged a romantic assignation in the honeymoon suite of a New Hampshire hotel. It was to have been held yesterday, but John Goydan's divorce suit cooled their ardour.

In an unprecedented action, he claims his wife and her admirer, Ray, "got it on" during computerised discussions. Ray, believed to be married, tended to conclude his messages with hugs and kisses symbols.

Mr Goydan discovered their tryst when he returned early from work one day, to the surprise of his wife. She hurriedly switched off the computer, tearing paper from the printer.

Mr Goydan used his technical superiority to call up his wife's old e-mail on screen — and was appalled. He asked her to stop the electronic liaison, but in vain.

In November she messaged The Weasel saying she wished they were in bed together "in flannel nightshirts" and able to make love. She said she did not love her husband and, because of his vigilance, they needed to be careful. "I want so badly to be with you that I am willing to chance it."

Once the meeting was arranged, she wrote: "Do you consider our relationship an affair?" "I'm not so sure it hits me as such, since we haven't actually laid a finger on each other... But I guess it'll be a different story in a couple of weeks."

Intrigued legal commentators said the case may indicate whether spouses have a right to see one another's e-mail.

For computer companies, meanwhile, there was the less cerebral satisfaction that this much-discussed example of "cybersex" may help to polish the Internet's nerdish image.

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GET ON TO LONDON

Pleasure industry booms in China's new power-house

AMERICAN sailors in Shanghai for a friendly visit on board the *USS Fort McHenry* will find a very different city from the one seen during the last American port call there in 1989, just before the Tiananmen crackdown.

Shanghai was still an austere place then, largely untouched by the economic reforms that had transformed cities in southern China. But since the reforms took off in 1992, Shanghai has become a burgeoning power-house, not only of industry but also of entertainment, with its 5,000 bars, nightclubs, dancehalls, discos and karaoke bars, all with their array of smiling hostesses.

The last visit to Shanghai by a US Navy ship was just a day before Li Peng, the Prime Minister, declared martial law in Peking at the height of pro-democracy demonstrations. These protests were subsequently crushed on June 4, 1989.

In the picturesquely tree-lined former French concession in Shanghai, which in pre-war days was the site of many *maisons de plaisir*, a foreign envoy and his wife were startled recently in their diplomatic residence to hear the wail of police sirens, followed by girlish screams just down the road.

"It turned out that a nearby cafe where I had often thought of dropping in for a coffee had been fronting as a brothel," the diplomat said. "The police carted off about 22 girls for 're-education'."

The world's oldest profession has returned to Shanghai where, in its heyday in the 1920s and 1930s, white Russian girls entertained American sailors and seafarers.

6 Predictably, revival of the sex industry has led to the scourge of Aids

Highlanders and Chinese could seek out the thrills of the Great World, a six-storey pleasure palace where, at each level, the sing-song girls wore their *cheongsams* slit little higher, until on the top floor they were cut to the waist.

Predictably, the revival of the sex industry here has led to a rise in venereal disease, and the menace of a scourge that did not exist in the free-wheeling 1930s — Aids. A total of 82 HIV cases have been detected in the city, with one case of Aids.

Shanghai newspapers blame the problem on the breakdown of family values, pornography and a get-rich-quick mentality, and they say that child prostitutes, such as those who were once to be found before the war in opium dens and brothels, have also made a comeback.

Russian girls who, before the Communists took power in 1949, were billed as the "sweetest, cleanest girls in the world", are also back after the collapse of Soviet communism, with Ukrainians thrown in for good measure. Some of these large, blonde girls — favoured by gangsters and businessmen — do the nearest thing to a striptease possible in China, while others offer love for sale.

Even the Great World has opened again as an entertainment centre, having been closed by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution and

James Pringle, in the third of his reports from Shanghai, looks at the return of the world's oldest profession to a once austere city

turned into a warehouse, while staff were sent off to labour in the countryside.

Nowadays, this oriental pleasure house is intended to lure mainly transient labourers or poorer tourists, with an entry fee of only 10 yuan (30p). Though it holds little of its former allure, it is still more than a little bizarre.

"Let us join together and unite our efforts to have a great time," encourages a girl in socialist solidarity style, wearing a gaudy party dress as a rock band swings into action — at only 10am.

Unlike the bad old prewar days, when coolies orrickshaw drivers died unnoticed on Shanghai streets, everyone gets a slice of the action now.



A nurse treats a child injured in the dynamite blast in Shaoyang, central China

Over 100 killed as illegal dynamite hoard explodes

BY JAMES PRINGLE

MORE than 100 people died when illegally stored dynamite exploded, destroying a block of flats and devastating the area around it in the Chinese city of Shaoyang. Another 400 people were injured.

"At first we thought it was an earthquake," said a rescue co-ordinator in the central-southern province of Hunan.

A local television executive said the entire street had been levelled. A brief film report on central TV last night showed hundreds of soldiers, police and volunteers searching through the rubble. All that remained of the five-storey flat block was a huge crater, the official *Hunan Daily* reported. Windows were shattered and injuries were reported more than a mile from the blast.

The official death toll stood at 77 but was certain to rise above 100 as soldiers extracted bodies from the rubble of several collapsed buildings, the rescue official said.

Workers are still digging through the debris and expect to find

more bodies. The death toll will rise above 100," he added.

The cause of the blast, the Hunan newspaper reported, was ten tonnes of military dynamite which a resident of the block of flats had stored in the basement, where he ran an illegal explosives firm. City officials declined to comment on a report that police suspected the dynamite was detonated intentionally in an act of revenge. The resident was believed to be among those killed.

Two survivors were extracted on Thursday, almost a day after the blast. "Most of our patients were either crushed or struck by flying masonry," a doctor in a Shaoyang hospital said.

Officials said the dynamite merchant had received a consignment of explosives in lieu of money from a debtor and stored them in the basement. It is not uncommon for private mining families in China to store explosives and detonators in their homes, and similar accidents have happened in the past.

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Rushdie challenges 'ban'

Delhi: Salman Rushdie is asking the Indian Supreme Court to overturn what he claims is an unofficial ban on his latest novel, *The Moor's Last Sigh* (Christopher Thomas writes). The Government's principal objection appears to be that a dog in the book is named after Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first Prime Minister.

Indian Customs authorities, without making any public announcement, ruled that the book should not be allowed into the country. Mr Rushdie's Indian lawyer, Vijay Shankardass, said that

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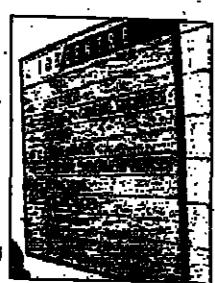
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■ OPINION

Looking for a different sort of career move? How about writing a soap opera for Romania?

■ OPERA

Many happy returns, or perhaps not: a 100th birthday staging of *Bohème* falls flat

THE TIMES ARTS



■ MUSIC

Veterans in vintage form: the Borodin String Quartet wins acclaim at the Wigmore



■ ON MONDAY

Paul and I: distinguished artists talk about what Cézanne's art means to them

The British and the Americans are the greatest showbiz nations on Earth. That's what they think in New York, too... except that they leave out the bit about the British. What they can't ignore, however, is the unstoppable march of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber. Last Monday, *Cats* became the longest-running musical ever on Broadway or in the West End. Confronted with this unarguable evidence of British superiority — at least when it comes to dressing up in fury overalls and crooning the less intractable poems of T.S. Eliot — even the most chauvinistic of American showbiz scribes might have offered our tunesome knight a word ofudging admiration.

Not a bit of it. *Variety*, the American trade magazine, chirrily points out that although *Cats* has clocked up more performances than *A Chorus Line*, the American show "has still grossed more at the box office", since it has apparently played in larger theatres.

This is fighting talk. Soon, no

doubt, the Americans will be emptying chests of Lloyd Webber hits into Boston Harbour. Happily, revenge is at hand. This week, the Americans obligingly shipped to London one of the ghastliest musicals ever to reach the stage: *The Fields of Ambrosia* begins with a cheerful chorus as a convict frizzles on an electric chair... and then gets really tasteless.

Naturally, the British critics gleefully put the boot into our westerly cousins. "Surely something can be done to discourage the dumping of American theatrical refuse in attractive London theatres," giggled Nicholas de Jongh in the *Evening Standard*.

Unfortunately, London-based

American journalists have already filed their retaliation. Yes, they have reviewed *Les Enfants du Paradis*, the RSC's "from here to eternity" show at the Barbican.

Now the transatlantic showbiz war has turned really dirty. The Americans have unleashed one of their deadliest weapons — an album of Burt Bacharach hits — to infiltrate our charts and debilitate our teenagers. We thought we had seen the last of *Raindrops keep falling on my head* a generation ago; now, it seems, we must fight the Battle of Bathos all over again.

And we shall. A British produc-

er plans a £10 million staging of Sir Cliff Richard's youthful magnum opus, *Summer Holiday*. It must be dispatched to Broadway immediately. The American sur-

render will follow within days.

At least a month has passed since we last played the Wackiest Job Title in a game. I knew it was due for revival as soon as that Polynesian tree snail hit the front pages this

week, because the London Zoo keeper who was wheeled out to lament its demise was described as "assistant curator of lower invertebrates". "Funny, I thought that was my job," said my wife, who

teaches in one of London's more ebullient state primary schools.

Our man in the small world was clearly the front-runner for the award. But then came the BBC's latest recruitment advertisement. What the soaring Beeb most needs now, it has decided, is a "Soap Opera Consultant". As they say on *EastEnders*: wassat?

I'll tell you. The phone rings at 4am. Soap Opera Consultant Superhero had been working late on a tricky diamond-smuggling storyline for *Coronation Street*. But immediately he is up, pen in hand. The voice at the other end of the line is terse. "Get to Liverpool by dawn. *Brookside* needs a three-in-a-bed lesbian romp. I'll fax you last week's *Archers* script: you'll find a similar situation involving the new vicar on page 12. Then take the next plane to Sydney. There's trouble on *Neighbours*.

a handful of tourists each night for about 2p a ticket. So I interviewed an opera house spokeswoman.

"What does privatising the opera mean?" I asked. "More money is desperately needed," she replied. "But where is this money to come from?" I persisted, in the specially tenacious voice that I reserve for bullying small women. "More realistic ticket prices? Sponsorship from Western business?"

"No," she exclaimed, incredulously. "From the State!"

Clearly the word privatisation does not translate easily into Romanian. Never mind: I am sure that with a little help from the BBC's Soap Opera Consultant Superhero, Romania's newly privatised industries will soon be surging into realms of profit unknown even to British water companies. Or else the whole country will be gripped by the unfolding saga of a three-in-a-bed lesbian romp. Either way, it's another international triumph for the BBC. Lord Reith would have been proud.

DONALD COOPER

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

WILLIAM DAZELEY



Age: 29

Profession: Baritone

Where can he be heard? Dazeley is playing Marcello in the centenary *La Bohème* at the Albert Hall. "I'm bringing out the frustration in Marcello who, while having everything in control emotionally, knows there's something missing, is jealous of Rodolfo's tender love."

After *Bohème*: "This is my Count year," Dazeley says. "He will be the Count in Figaro, with *Opera North* and Glyndebourne Touring.

Opera, then "the same character in a different opera" Massenet's *Chérubin* for his Covent Garden début.

Background: "At school (Rugby), contemplated being a cellist, but the hours of practice sounded grim. Read German and French at Cambridge."

Why did he become an opera singer? "I've always been singing," he says. "But one day at Cambridge my singing teacher asked me if I'd thought of making it a career." Dazeley recalls "giving some blasé response". He shouldered me for half an hour about treating a talent with such indifference. It shocked me, someone caring so much about a part of me. I started working."

Close shaves: Playing Don Giovanni in Israel, Dazeley was narrowly missed by a gigantic Christ, crashing down from the flies. He has only had one stinking review, but the critic accidentally put another performer's name.

Ambitions: Longs to play Billy Budd. "More generally," he says, "I would like to work four months a year abroad — where you earn five times as much — so I could choose the jobs I really want to do here. The work here is excellent, innovative, and going in the right direction, drawing out opera's drama and meaning, not just its spectacle."

On himself: "I think I'm fairly relaxed about things. I do have an explosion about once a year, which is horrendous for everyone." What else? "Quietly ambitious."

KATE BASSETT

Too much power to the people

While you have to admire Raymond Gubbay's missionary zeal in bringing good music to the widest possible audience — and, although you wouldn't think it during the last few weeks' hype, there are one or two other organisations seeking to do the same thing — some crucially bad decisions were taken in the centenary arena staging of Puccini's *Opera*.

For a start, why amplification? Since the Albert Hall was built, singers of all kinds have performed there perfectly audibly. Glyndebourne takes opera there without fearing the need for mikes; one of Britten's Church Parables has been staged in the round at the Proms, and worked extremely well. The game was given away when the bit-part players in the third act sang mike-free, and sounded clear as a bell.

Then, having decided to amplify, why do so badly something that nowadays can be done really rather well? It was a standard that no pop group would have put up with for a minute. The voices sounded clogged, woofy and

indistinct. With the BBC Concert Orchestra seemingly randomly amplified as well, the sound-picture in the first two acts was simply chaotic.

After the interval, someone had second thoughts and the band mikes were doused, which improved the general balance, but also had the unfortunate effect of highlighting the fact that a few more rehearsals

would not have come amiss.

All of which, plus the over-spill between soloists' individual mikes, made it almost impossible to judge the quality of the voices. The Chilean tenor José Azocar, familiar from last year's Cardiff Singer of the World competition, seemed greatly inhibited, at times crooning rather than singing out, but when he did let fly his warm middle register and ringing top sounded distinctly promising. In the third act — Katerina Kudriavchenko's mike must have been on the blink, and her bright tone and agreeably swoony phrasing were heard in their own right — the advantage, earlier, she made as much as possible of Mimì's big moments through the general murk. Sadly, her mike

returned in the fourth act.

It would have been a help to have had a conductor more demonstrative and engaged than James Lockhart. He made few allowances for an arena setting, concentrating on keeping his band more or less together and leaving the singers to follow him via monitors, on which his discreet beat must have been virtually invisible. Had he beaten "bigger", the music in the second act might not have been apart quite so regularly.

And if you are going to do arena opera, then you need a really strong, imaginative director. This *Bohème* was hardly directed at all, save at village-hall level. A handful of extras wandering about aimlessly is no substitute for

production, and there was

little suggestion of the *miseria* on which the action depends in Alison Neale's simple basic set or John Bright's handsome, inescapably bourgeois costumes.

All depended, then, on the soloists using their experience to get through the surface action. Vivian Tierney's simple *Madame Butterfly* deserved special praise, and Tomás Tomassón's smoothly phrased *Colline* sounded extremely promising.

Gubbay seems to want to challenge subsidised opera. If this is privatised opera, with corners cut and expense spared, include me out.

RODNEY MILNES

"If this is privatised opera, include me out": *La Bohème* turns 100 in strained circumstances at the Albert Hall

Nothing to prove but their genius

JANUARY saw an extraordinary cornucopia of string quartets in London: first the Lindsays, then the Emersons, and finally the fathers of them all, the Borodin Quartet, formed in 1945

by Moscow Conservatoire students, and still touring the world with the energy of 20-year-olds.

The wisdom, though, is that of their years. There is no need to foster their credibility with the great cycles. At the Wigmore, the Borodins played just what they pleased, and capacity audiences have been delighted in their Tchaikovsky, Schumann, Borodin, Rachmaninov and Janáček. On Wednesday, Shostakovich took centre-stage: the composer who personally supervised their study of each of his quartets, and whose presence is still intensely real in their performances.

The Quartet No 3 in F seemed to grow out of eternity. Dry dance steps from way back in time accompanied a lone Chagall fiddler, and joined "him" as the "dance macabre" reached ever higher in its frenzy. Two scherzo-like movements follow, and the Borodins had the measure of them both. The first takes its tone of voice from the gruff viola's first three notes, met by a pair of teetch violins; the second is harder, more propulsive in its loud downbows, icy chords and masked viola dance.

The way in which the slow movement led into the finale showed how the Borodins are masters of the art of creating an intuitively free flow of dialogue while keeping every

resonance and a pale, sweet song that barely rose above an undertone. Changes of intensity were marked by shifts in definition rather than by anything as vulgar as true dynamic change.

Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* Quartet seemed by now an inevitable sequel. Again, understatement and austerity ruled as tight, brisk rhythms created the lightest of accompaniments to the violins' slender melody. The second idea sidestepped into a sour-sweet dance which gave a sudden pre-echo of the Schubert in Mahler.

The breathing of the great central song that gives the quartet its name was kept just alive by faint vibrato, held in the gentle sway of its light dactyl rhythm. And the final rondo became a real dance of

death, a fight to the end, not without a scar or two on the way to tell one of the most gripping tales London heard in a month of quartets.

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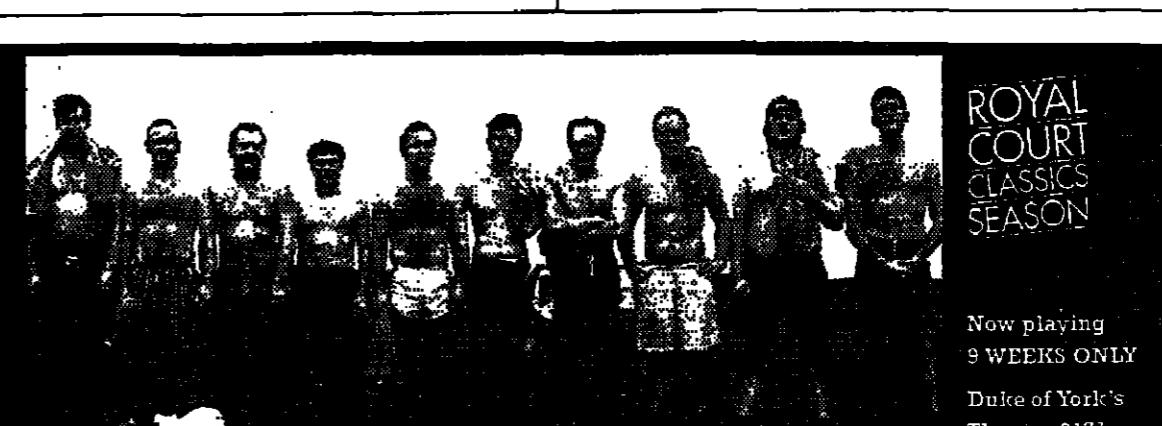
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SUNDAY TIMES

John Redwood argues that Britain cannot ignore Republican candidate Steve Forbes's radical ideas on taxation

America and Canada are in a spin over the flat tax. Electing usually concentrates the minds of politicians. It forces them closer to the wishes and views of voters. This time round the Republicans are no exception. They had to live down President Bush's broken promises on taxes. They rallied to the stronger colours of Newt Gingrich and swept to victory in the congressional elections. Could they bring off the double of winning the presidency as well as holding the Hill? Is there a candidate who can both unite them and win? Do they need and do they dare to offer big tax cuts?

The flat tax has catapulted Steve Forbes into the spotlight. The race up to that point had been a well-run Dolemobile cruising around the circuit, with a good Republican-designed sedan from Senator Gramm making a cautious start. Suddenly, from nowhere, there was the sound of a very fast Forbes saying that all Americans need only pay a single income tax rate of less than 20 per cent. The middle classes should be given a big break.

During my recent visit to Washington to debate with Newt Gingrich, I was asked about the flat tax. Not wishing to interfere in other people's elections by positioning myself on the defining bend on the primary circuit, I explained that it was not a matter that came up in

British debate. Few here suggest that the top rate of tax should be abolished, or the lowest rate of tax removed. To us it is more important to lower the overall burden of taxation. We want to cut taxes for everyone by controlling spending, rather than by being particularly concerned to lower the income tax burden on the higher earners.

In the heyday of the Reagan-Thatcher tax-cutting policies, people recognised that cutting tax rates could boost tax revenues. If that was so in the 1980s, could it prove the same again? If we cut our income tax rates further, would more people pay more tax? In the 1980s, cutting the top rate of tax in the UK from 98 per cent to 40 per cent made a big difference. More rich people stayed in Britain. More rich people reinvested and created more income, fewer spent money on smart tax lawyers to arrange their affairs to avoid tax. The tax from the rich rose as a proportion of the total, and so on as the rates came down.

If you move from a percentage rate of 100 per cent or 98 per cent, you would expect this to happen. Few rich people are going to stay

around without good tax lawyers if almost all they earn is taken away. Clearly there is also a point at which cutting rates ceases to raise more revenue. A tax rate of zero percent would not fill the Treasury coffers. What is the best level?

International competition has an influence on all this. If America and Canada do go to a flat rate of 17 or 18 per cent, they will be much more attractive than we are for footloose investors, fancy-free companies and rich individuals looking for a summer palace or an investment haven. The Americans would lower the international rate of tax. We would have to follow some of the way if we were not to lose out.

The American debate is also about what incentive people now need to take care of themselves and their families without recourse to the State. The United States is alarmed by the rate of social breakdown. Middle America, finding it difficult to make ends meet in a competitive world, is saying it must have a tax break to carry on.

Bill Clinton's State of the Union address showed how he too has to mirror conservative words and deeds, as he squares up to the



Redwood: letter from America

electorate again. His speech stressed the fact that "the era of big government is over". He looked forward to balancing the budget, and launched a ferocious defence of families in which both parents accept responsibilities for their children.

Newt Gingrich has touched many chords and a few sensitive nerves in his remarks, none more so than in his language of American renewal. He is out to modernise the American dream

and to show that he and his allies on the Hill are on the side of hard-working Middle America, against the politically correct liberal establishment. It was this which swept him to success. It is this which Bill Clinton now has to copy.

More recently, Newt's revolutionary language has upset some traditional conservatives. They instead read his message — that a drastic technological revolution is under way. They fear a more sinister suggestion that conservatives are now radicals, that their world is turned upside down and Republicans are going to lead people to the barricades. The conservatives must distinguish clearly. Like it or not, the world is entering a new and more intensive phase of technological change. Hence there is all the more need to buttress not only timeless values but also some institutions.

All conservative — and for that matter, all radical — parties are coalitions. For every new congressman who is egging Gingrich on to further change, there are several traditional conservatives attracted to other parts of his message, especially to his rock-solid defence

of traditional values. The think-tanks within the Washington Beltway may be busy drawing parallels with other revolutionary eras and forecasting massive political and constitutional upheaval. The rank and file of the Republican Party, especially in the South, are hoping that there will be ample helpings of motherhood, fatherhood and apple pie as well.

Here in Britain, Conservatives have a more obvious role in acting as some constitutional anchor in the violent storms now hitting the British body politic. We have to make sure that out-of-date ideas from the age of mass production, big government and the Cold War are not allowed to rule by creating a monstrous United States of Europe with a protectionist and anti-American flavour. We have to resist regional government of a kind and temper that could start the fragmentation of the kingdom.

At the same time, we have to show we understand that the information age will change politics, giving people more direct access and influence over government at all levels, if they want it.

The passive television with the didactic news will be replaced by a multiplicity of channels and interactive TV, allowing the audience to hit back. Many people are after more content and depth than slogan and soundbite politics permits. Politics by doorstep, public meeting and the leaflet will be supplemented by the politics of the mailshot, the internet message and the phone or cable-in.

It is a fine balancing act welcoming the necessary economic change that can make us more prosperous and link us to the global market, while reassuring through the stability which traditional values and cherished institutions can bring. We can and should join hands across the Atlantic. The alliance has served us well. Conservatives can and must strengthen it. The investment and trade interests are great. The shared language and history will be important in the future shape of a world in which English will rule. An era of popular democracy can be enlivened by these challenges.

As Mr Blair and Mr Clinton have had to accept, people are hungry for more true pragmatic conservatism, not less. Above all, they want taxes down.

The author is MP for Wokingham and a former Welsh Secretary.

Hemsworth, PR and the lessons for new Labour

Anthony Howard
on the limits of electoral reform

The Hemsworth by-election result has fired a shot across the bows of the campaigners for electoral reform within the Labour Party. True, Arthur Scargill's candidate for the as yet unformed Socialist Labour Party did pretty dismal. But Brenda Nixon's 1,193 votes still sound a warning that any scheme for precise proportional representation could end up causing just as many problems for Labour as its protagonists have always claimed it will do for the Tories.

The arithmetic is easy. Under the present system, if Scargill's candidates get more than 5 per cent of the vote in any constituency at the next election (as Mrs Nixon did in Hemsworth), they will save their deposits. But change the rules and, if they pass a national aggregate of 5 per cent (as prescribed, for example, by the German electoral system), they will be entitled to representation in a PR-elected House of Commons.

Some people, of course, suspect that is what Tony Blair has wanted all along. Proportional representation might finally allow him to shed what Bill Rodgers used to call "the illegitimate left". But he would do so only at a considerable price. When President Mitterrand altered the electoral rules in France — a change that has now been unscrambled — he did so solely in order to embarrass his enemies. He wanted to see M. Le Pen's National Front eat into the support within the National Assembly of the traditional right-wing parties. The hidden lesson of Hemsworth is that in Britain, such a scheme could have precisely the opposite result.

But what of the implications for Labour? No one doubts the sincerity of those within the party who are currently campaigning for electoral reform. They are passionate, they are committed and have contrived to give the impression that they are within sight of the Holy Grail. If only their colleagues could be persuaded to see the light, then at least ten years of anti-Tory rule could be assured. Yet there remains one flaw in the Labour electoral reformers' vision. With their evangelical zeal, they mistake a mechan-

ical device for an idealistic trophy.

No electoral system is perfect; all are just means to an end.

The Labour Party first recognised that some 65 years ago. It is often forgotten that, in February 1931, the House of Commons actually carried the second reading of a Government Bill designed to bring reform about — only to see it will thwarted by a then wholly hereditary House of Lords. What the Commons then voted for, by a majority of 65, was the simplest of all reforms, but one that has never satisfied the PR purists.

The proposal endorsed is known as "the single alternative vote" — meaning that in every constituency, voters, instead of placing an X on the ballot paper, should give their order of preference between the candidates. This (a practice that was adopted in the dozen university seats until 1950) would not in itself produce a House of Commons exactly reflecting national opinion. But it would still remove the more glaring injustices under our present "first past the post" system — whereby, for example, an MP can sit happily in the House of Commons for five years on a minority of the votes cast in his or her constituency.

Why, then, does Mr Blair — at least as an initial, modest step towards constitutional reform — not embrace the remedy that Ramsay MacDonald was prepared to recommend 65 years ago? The answer one is glumly given by those close to the Labour leader is that "the Liberal Democrats will not buy it". Such intransigence at the national level is all the harder to understand, given the readiness of Liberal Democrats in Scotland to compromise with Labour on a system of proportional representation for the proposed Scottish assembly.

The difficulty for the Labour leadership is that it is lumbered with John Smith's pledge to hold a referendum on electoral reform at some unspecified date, once it has entered into government. It may, therefore, not want to give the impression now of pre-judging the issue. The Liberal Democrats should not be privately told that the single alternative vote is likely to be the only option on the table — and that, if they want to go on baying after a political moon made of green cheese, fragmented parties and fractional minorities, then they can do so on their own.

Ulster's real peacemakers

Despite the politicians' attempts to impose a solution on Northern Ireland, local communities are forging new links

ominous news from Northern Ireland. The Peace Process is back on course. John Major is emerging as the most daring gambler in Ireland's postwar history. He has brought about not only an IRA ceasefire but a year of sustained peace. He has induced two foreign Governments, the Irish and the American, to help to curb violence. He has kept Unionists in line through a bevy of concessions to the IRA. He now seems about to win his latest gambit, "pre-talks" elections. Those who portray John Major as a bemused apostle wandering the ruins of Thatcherism should study his Ulster policy. It has flair and it has class.

Yet the news is ominous. Mr Major's gamble may succeed. There are currently two peace processes running in Northern Ireland. They both originate in the Downing Street declaration of 1994, but they are moving in divergent directions. One has capital letters and is the copyright of Mr Major and his Ulster Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew: it is the much-vaunted Peace Process. The other lies deep in the soil of Northern Ireland and is little noticed. I call it the process of peace.

The process of peace has been astonishing. Ulster since the ceasefire is almost as changed as Berlin since the collapse of its wall. Fortresses have been demolished, even Londonderry's awesome Roseram tower. The obscenities of communal strife are disappearing. In response, tourism rose last year by 55 per cent. French car components, Taiwanese textiles, seven new Sainsbury stores have arrived. Inward investment and exports are surging. The healing balm of public spending has shifted from security hardware to restoring the landscape.

Nor is this all. Peace also pumps through the veins of local politics. On Belfast and Londonderry districts, former enemies are sitting down, negotiating and sharing power. They are even sharing the mayoralty. The 26 districts may cut no ice in Washington or

London, but they are the forcing house of a new Ulster democracy. Fifteen of them have Sinn Fein members. In five the nationalists have an overall majority. Since the ceasefire, politicians whose party leaders flatly refuse to discuss power-sharing at a higher level are already sharing it. They have moved on. They are the true democrats of Ulster's peace. It is the MPs who are out of date.

This "process of peace" reflects the steady redrawing of the political map. The ethnic cleansing of Ulster west of the Bann has continued. The predominantly Catholic areas, especially the Londonderry conurbation, are virtually parts of the Republic. The border with Donegal hardly exists and Londonderry, on my last visit, felt like a Southern town. From Armagh through Fermanagh to Londonderry lies a sickle of nationalism, a cordon sanitaire between Protestant Ulster and the Irish Republic. Northern Ireland is being

normalised by peace and its local democracy reflects that normalcy. This is more important than a dozen round-table conferences.

There is no reason for this process not to develop. There is no reason for nationalist and Unionist councils, perhaps after judicious amalgamation, to be denied more democracy over housing, schools, transport and industry. There is no reason why the existing links forged with the South by Londonderry and other nationalist councils should not grow on their own. The border is now politically permeable. Northern Ireland could be a test-bed for bottom-up democratic politics in healing the wounds of divided societies.

The grandees and groups of Mr Major's "Peace Process" maintain that all this depends on them. Their way is different. One thing alone links Bill Clinton and John Major, John Bruton and John Hume, Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams. This is a belief that the only way forward is along the same path that has failed for a quarter century, through a swamp of tracks and strands, of catch-phrases and constitutions, of

getting parties round the table, of talks about talks about.

To what end? To reach something that can be declared a settlement. What is the content of that settlement? The answer is nothing but that bugbear of 1973, a provincial assembly and a power-sharing executive. Mr Major recently promised that there would be "no return to Stormont". What he meant was the old Stormont of the Protestant ascendancy. He did not mean a new Stormont in which harmony and concord reign. Here is the true mindset of the Peace Process, the search for some complex constitutional blocking system for a devolved assembly. It is intended to stop Protestants overriding Catholics, to pretend that a divided society can be administered without regard to the balance of forces within it.

Like new Labour, new Stormont would eventually become a version of the old. Ulster's political realities are as yet unchanged, the balance of power is the same. As Mr Hume has pointed out, any new Stormont will revive the old antagonisms, the old shouting, the old storming out. Divided regions cannot be ruled by military authorities. The boss of new Stormont would presumably be the Unionist leader, David Trimble. Sooner or later he would lose the consent of the nationalists.

This sort of top-down settlement is the curse of Ireland. It emerges from 20 years of colonialism, 20 years of conferences, forums and seminars, of hotels, universities, dinners and receptions. It dazzles by demolishing each new idea. It adores its historical repartee, the well-turned quip of a Garret Fitzgerald or a Conor Cruise O'Brien.

When I first delved into this world, its participants were young and vigorous. They are now old and cynical. And the dance goes on, the orchestra plays. Mr Paisley still looks sinister and Mr Hume careworn. Mr Adams still reminds us of a dark night on the Falls Road. With each step in the Process, the venues get grander. Those who once stumbled down the steps of Stormont now grace those of Dublin Castle, Downing Street and even the White House. The dance of Stormont's "moment from Oi! What a Lovely War".

Any revival of a provincial assembly in Northern Ireland would threaten the true process of peace. It would reassert the religious divide in Ulster, rehabilitate the ranters and stifle the emerging local councils that hold the key to peaceful coexistence. That is why the nationalist rank and file is right to oppose it. A new assembly would give jobs, status and patronage to precisely the players whose minds are stuck in the past conflict. They should be pensioned off.

The best hope for Ulster is that Mr Major's formal Process neither collapses nor succeeds, that he can keep both Catholic and Protestant extremists at bay by constant stalling. But he must do something. Stalling is a strategy only if he invigorates the true process of peace, on the ground in Northern Ireland. That involved delegating even more of his direct rule powers to democratic bodies below the provincial tier. That would involve an emphatic British commitment both against a revived Stormont and in favour of local devolution.

Mr Major is not known as an enthusiast for local self-government. In Ulster it does not offer a glamourous peace. It is not the sort of solution that can be boasted at top tables. It blows no trumpets and rings no bells. It offers no triumph for presidents and prime ministers to acclaim. There would be no Stormont theatricals, no stormings-out. The media would be bored. There would only be the steady hum of democracy at work. For the doyen of this Peace Process, I fear that would be an anticlimax too far.

Mr Punch

ONE OF the country's oldest and best-loved magazines is to rise again this year from the ashes. *Punch*, the 150-year-old journal for comic writers and cartoonists which closed in 1992, has been bought by Mike Molloy, a former Editor of the *Daily Mirror*.

In partnership with his friend Mike Alders, who used to own an advertising agency, Molloy took over the old comic on Thursday from United Newspapers, which had been trying for more than a year to sell it for around £500,000. Molloy refused yesterday to talk about the money that changed hands, but said that his lifelong ambition had always been to edit *Punch*. "We don't know yet if we're going to bring it back as a weekly, a fortnightly or a monthly," he said. "But we will bring back *Punch*, probably in the autumn. I was Editor-in-Chief at the *Mirror* for five years under Robert Maxwell. It was probably the best training for a humorous magazine."

Comic writers are, er, *Punch*-drunk with excitement. Our own Alan Coren, who edited *Punch* for

ten years, was delighted: "Under United's ownership, it fell between the two market stools of middle-aged literacy and young subversiveness and it lost money." Coren added: "Punch must be funny from cover to cover, and I am sure Mike Molloy understands that."

The Princess of Wales appeared to enjoy the gala performance of



Punch: fell between two stools



DIARY

will travel to Fulton, Missouri, to speak at the university where Sir Winston Churchill made his Iron Curtain speech.

It will be almost 50 years to the day since Churchill visited Fulton's Westminster College to declare: "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent." Advance copies of the *Sir Winston's Address*, as it is sometimes called, had not contained the iron curtain passage.

James Traer, the president of Westminster College, said this week: "Lady Thatcher represents the Churchillian statue of British statesmanship." The numerous Churchill busts who will gather in Fulton for the anniversary will also take a ride in vintage railcars, fol-

Heart of gold

YESTERDAY'S article about Lady Romsey's gold pendant with a name inscribed on it was incorrect. I am sorry that I suggested that the name picked out in gold was hers. In fact, it was that of her late daughter, Leonora.

The heart-shaped pendant has a history which began some years ago when Lady Romsey's father-in-law, Lord Brabourne, underwent a serious heart operation. His nurses were wearing such pendants and, grateful to have survived the op, he wanted one made up for his wife. In fact, two were made.

When his son Nicky was tragically killed in 1979 by Earl Mountbatten, a terrorist bomb, Lord Brabourne had the heart inscribed with the young man's signature. Similarly, when little Leonora died, he had her name placed over the second pendant in her own writing, and gave it to his daughter-in-law, Lady Romsey, to whom it is a most special piece of jewellery.



Liz Hurley: even more stroppy

With all this talk about MPs and their pay, we have good news for Dennis Skinner. His son, Dennis (true), is being tipped for a £60,000-a-year job with London's Camden council in a shake-up of senior

management. Dennis Jr is firm favourite to become assistant chief executive policy and partnerships, and Dad is thrilled. "He's a bright lad — he's always being promoted," says Dennis Sr. "He got four A levels — that's four more than John Major — and he's got an economics degree."

Fatal femme

HUGH GRANT is likely to keep out of trouble from now on, not least because his girlfriend, the pulchritudinous Liz Hurley, describes herself as "bossy" and "tough". In a punchy interview for *OK!* magazine, she describes an episode in which she considers she should have been even "more stroppy". Playing a hard-nosed reporter for a television film, she thought the costume given her by the wardrobe department — strappy sandals and a minuscule designer skirt — was inappropriate. "To play someone real you should be in your jeans and T-shirt. We had some terrible rows and I ended up too glam in a mini-dress. Weakness can be fatal," Grant would doubtless agree.

P.H.S



TO THE CONVENTION

Sinn Fein should work for peace through politics

A spirit of compromise too often absent in Northern Ireland allowed the funeral of the republican terrorist Gino Gallagher to pass without serious incident yesterday. A cortege of men in berets may be an uncomfortable reminder that republicanism is as much at home rattling sabres as shaking presidential hands, but a difficult day did not assume the dangerous significance it could have done.

Republican resentment with the speed of the peace process does, however, seem to be growing. The show of Sinn Fein strength at Milltown Cemetery and the shots fired on Thursday night at the home of an RUC officer suggest the peace in Northern Ireland is still brittle. If democracy is to take root, its defenders should use all their energy to make the case for politics as the route to peace.

The nature of Irish republicanism makes it difficult to discern the real feelings of the movement's leaders, let alone its grass roots. Sinn Fein is a Leninist party which debates internally and does not welcome public dissent. The experience of splits in the Seventies re-inforces the cautious, and centralised, style of its leadership. For that reason warnings from Gerry Adams about IRA impatience with the pace of the peace process are as likely to be veiled threats as open agonising. Given the closed nature of his party, its president can portray himself as responding to pressure rather than creating it.

Nevertheless, recent events do suggest a genuine unease among republicans. Having hoped that the Mitchell report would remove one obstacle to all-party talks — decommissioning weapons — they felt thwarted by what they saw as the erection of another: elections. It would be impossible to secure the attendance of the Unionists who represent majority opinion in the Province without elections first; but Sinn Fein is not inclined to appreciate Unionist sensitivities. A movement built on intimidation is impatient with parties which prefer pluralism.

Republican impatience has not yet meant a significant momentum for a return to

armed struggle. But military muscles are being flexed. The shooting of drug dealers and punishment beatings serve to keep Sinn Fein soldiers in line and IRA volunteers in practice. Gino Gallagher, "chief of staff" of the terrorist splinter group, the INLA, was more irritant than ally to Sinn Fein. His associates suspect he may have been another IRA victim. Whoever pulled the trigger, the presence of so many Sinn Fein figures at his funeral sent a simple message, one which Mr Adams had let slip on a previous occasion: the IRA has not gone away.

But if republicans are to play a part in future talks, the fears aroused among the greater number by the threat of physical force need to be allayed. Decommissioning may be difficult; the culture of no surrender is every bit as embedded in republican minds as loyalist. Fortunately, other ways exist to build confidence. A willingness to contest elections to a peace convention and secure a fresh mandate for a political solution to Northern Ireland's troubles could advance matters dramatically.

It is a pity that President Clinton did not take advantage of his conversation this week with Mr Adams to advocate elections as a route to talks. Top republicans have become accustomed to practising their politics in first-class compartments and at \$100 dinners rather than street corners and safe houses. The knowledge that the red carpet would not be rolled out at the White House if Sinn Fein rejected the elective process would have concentrated any closed minds within republican ranks.

All parties in Northern Ireland are grateful for 17 months of peace, and most are anxious to entrench it. Republican concerns about roadblocks to progress are understandable, but the greatest impediment to peace is their own unwillingness to work within democratic structures. Sinn Fein has come a long way since it decided to abandon abstentionism; it would be tragic if the party were to refuse to embrace the most important elections of all — to a body which could bring Northern Ireland's people together.

PER AMATEUR AD ASTRA

Whether the fuel be hydrogen, sugar or pure imagination

Britain's latest rocket was successfully launched yesterday. As Satmars and Soyuzes go, it made only a small bang. After accelerating to 450mph, it reached the peak of its climb at 3.000ft and was then parachuted back to Earth. To break away from the Earth's gravitational pull and into orbit it will have to climb much faster and farther than that: over 25,000mph and at least 50 miles out into space.

So this is a small step for official rocketry. But it is a giant leap for the romantics who have launched man's adventures. Steve Bennett, the amateur rocketeer from Manchester, has already launched 12 rockets. His *Starchaser II* is the largest home-made rocket in Europe. It is sponsored by the sugar company, Tate & Lyle, which also contributes some secret ingredient to its fuel. Mr Bennett is competing against other space venturers for the prize of being the first amateur to launch into space.

It was war which first made rocketry the preserve of professionals. Sir William Congreve launched the horizontal rockets that were used against Napoleon. But it was the Second World War which transformed the business of whooshers and boosters. Only the military and the State made rockets, and especially the German varieties. Since the war, only the greatest nations have had the money and the scientific exhaust velocity for intercontinental ballistic missiles and space travel.

But the urge to escape from human

limitations appeals to more basic instincts even than defence and profit. This divine discontent and the itch for forbidden fruit are what distinguish the ascent of man from that of the other animals. Jules Verne started *From the Earth to the Moon* as a satire on crazy American enterprise. But he was so carried away by his vision of the stars that he turned it into the first serious story of space travel. And considering that he was inventing the theory of Astrogation, which he also named Astronautics, his physics and mathematics got a lot right. His account of the rivalries and bureaucratic obstruction in the Gun Club of Baltimore, with its immense gun to fire a rocket to the Moon, was prophetic of space programmes everywhere.

Verne even imagined countdown to blast-off, and the feelings of terror and exhilaration in the ground crew. So Mr Bennett is following an archetypal vapour trail of the imagination as well as the remarkable advances of rocket science. For an earth-bound, wingless creature to aim at the heavens is an ambition as old as that of the first philosophers. Now Mr Bennett is back in Manchester working on *Starchaser III*, standing on the achievements of rocketeers private and public, and the imaginations of all who have ever looked up at the full Moon. Jules Verne got it right: "thirty-eight! — thirty-nine — forty! FIRE!!" Rockets are fired by the imagination as well as liquid hydrogen, ions — or even sugar.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

But teenagers rarely honour their parents

Philip Larkin's famous thoughts about parents live on: however hard they try, they 'ness' their children up. Yesterday's erring mother was Marjorie Vickers, accused of too intense a devotion to her son, Stephen, an 18-year-old with severe physical handicaps, who was reduced last year in taking her to court in an effort to break away from her stifling over-protectiveness. The injunction he then won has now been overturned on the ground that prison would hardly be an appropriate punishment for overabundant love. His mother has still had to accept, though, that the best place for him is not by her side but at a special school.

A psychiatrist might spot a selfish element in Mrs Vickers's devotion. True love, after all, involves understanding the best interests of the one who is loved. True love sometimes has to involve letting go: almost always, in the case of a parent and child. In the case of a handicapped child, it may sometimes be tempting for a mother to assume that only she is capable of understanding his needs. But, in Stephen Vickers's circumstances, this was patently not true.

The most obviously dysfunctional families are those that thrive upon hatred or violence rather than love and affection. That of Agamemnon and his wife, Clytemnestra, must surely be the epitome. He killed their daughter, his wife killed him and their son killed her. But families do not have to end up as a pile of dramatically strewn bodies to be classed as failures. Sometimes parents are bad for their children not because they love

them too little but because they love them too much.

Even parents who think that they have worked out a healthy balance between love and possessiveness are usually blamed by their adolescent offspring for doing the wrong thing. The Montagues and Capulets were seen as tyrants who obstructed the true course of love. Yet the parents of Sarah Cook were widely condemned for allowing their 13-year-old daughter to marry a man four years older than Romeo. Tyranny or irresponsibility? Parents simply cannot get it right.

When children turn into teenagers, dissatisfaction becomes their leitmotif. Usually, they think their parents are too staid and unfashionable. Yet the alternative is just as bad. The subject of today's profile in our business section, Paul Simons, consciously keeps up with teenage trends so that he can make advertisements that will appeal to adolescents. Most teenage children, though, would dread having a 47-year-old father who could sing along to Blur and reach the last stage of Mortal Kombat.

The best parents are those who understand that bringing up children is a constant process of weaning. Encouraging them to be as independent as possible helps to turn them into confident adults. But the transition to adulthood requires a questioning of the unconditional love that younger children give their parents. Part of growing up is blaming your mother and father for the person you have become.

The rangers programme has helped to increase the pride and involvement of the local community in the well-being of its parks, which policing alone cannot achieve.

It must be hoped that some of the lottery money can be invested in implementing similar schemes elsewhere.

Yours faithfully,
SUSAN LASDUN,
51 Rowan Road, W6.
January 30.

The money to be given by the National Lottery to restore our public parks ("A green and pleasant land", January 29) is indeed cause for celebration.

I agree with Marcus Binney that improving the security in parks is essential if we are to safeguard the lottery investment from future vandalism. However I question that this is best achieved by simply increasing the numbers of police.

The inner-city London borough of Southwark, among others, has introduced a highly "proactive" park ranger service which organises educational and recreational activities in local parks, and at the same time their continuous presence minimises the need for police. These activities involve all age groups and are proving a constructive and lasting way to combat vandalism.

The rangers programme has helped to increase the pride and involvement of the local community in the well-being of its parks, which policing alone cannot achieve.

It must be hoped that some of the lottery money can be invested in implementing similar schemes elsewhere.

Yours faithfully,
NONA BYRNE, Chair,
The Catholic Building Society,
7 Stratton Ground, SW1.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Sentencing policy: the judges' clash with Home Office

From Mr Neville Goldrein

Sir. It is the duty of Parliament to legislate and the duty of the judiciary to carry out the decisions of the legislature. This applies not only to the general laws, but clearly also to the specific laws relating to sentencing. The law is made by Parliament and is administered by the courts.

In this context I fail to see the rationale of the objections by a number of judges to the Home Secretary's proposals for a mandatory life sentence for a second rape (report, February 1). The first objection appears to be that of a letter to their discretion which they consider should be unfettered. But in fact their discretion is always fettered in criminal cases.

Parliament always prescribes a maximum sentence for each offence — they are never open-ended — whether it be a fine of £10 or 14 years in prison. The judges do not object to this, but it limits their discretion. I question, then, their sudden aversion to this proposed mandatory life sentence.

In addition Lord Justice Rose told *The Times* that "rapists will think that they may as well kill their victims — there's no point in leaving them alive if the sentence is the same". That sounds plausible but disregards the fact that a life sentence is not a life sentence. I believe that the average term served by a "lifer" is nine years.

The length of the sentence is finally determined by the Home Secretary in the light of reports and professional advice from year to year. And so a vicious murder and a rape would clearly involve a longer term than that imposed for a "simple" second rape with a minimum of violence. If the rapist intends to stop to think it out — and I do not think that he does — it will be clear to him that there is every point in leaving the victim alive.

Until recently the judiciary have accepted their very essential and skilled role as administrators of the law.

They are not the law-makers. It would be better if the roles hitherto filled should remain unchanged.

I am, Sir, yours truly,
NEVILLE GOLDRINE,
Torre, St Andrew's Road,
Blundellsands, Liverpool.
February 1.

From Sir David Calcutt, QC

Sir. Mandatory sentences for serious criminal offences are alien to the English tradition. When death was the penalty for murder, a mandatory sentence was perhaps understandable.

When in 1963 death, as the penalty for murder, was replaced by a sentence of life imprisonment, it was perhaps understandable that, at that time, the sentence should have remained mandatory. But this was exceptional.

The circumstances in which offences are committed, and the degree of moral turpitude involved, vary widely from case to case. To deprive the judge, who is familiar with the particular facts of each case, of the discretion to do justice, in each case, can itself only lead to injustice.

If any change in the law is now to be made, it should be the removal of the anomaly of the continuing mandatory sentence for murder.

Yours faithfully,

DAVID CALCUTT,
35 Essex Street, Temple, WC2.

February 2.

From Lord Carlisle of Bucklow, QC

Sir. Anyone listening this morning to the Home Secretary on the Today programme, deriding the present system of sentencing as "half-time sentences for full-time crime" could be forgiven for failing to appreciate that the system was introduced by the Government as recently as October 1992.

It resulted from the unanimous recommendation of the review committee into the parole system, set up in 1987 by the then Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, for the very purpose of restoring "honesty into sentencing" and in implementation of a 1987 election pledge. Its membership included two members of the judiciary and a chief constable, and I had the privilege of chairing it.

Until 1991 anyone sentenced by the court could be released from prison at any time between one third and two thirds of their sentence, usually at the whim of the local review committee. All sentences ceased to have effect after the two-thirds point.

Under our proposals, as implemented by the Government, all prisoners serving sentences of up to four years must now spend half of their

sentence in prison. Subject to good behaviour they are then released back into the community, but they remain at risk of being required to serve the remaining part of their sentence should they be convicted of another offence before the expiry of their original full sentence.

Those sentenced to more than 12 months are also subject to a period of compulsory supervision in the community. For those serving four years or more the existing parole provisions remain, but every prisoner now has to serve at least half of the sentence in prison rather than one third as previously.

These principles were intended specifically to restore meaning to the whole of the sentence and to let both the convicted prisoner and the public know with certainty the effect of any sentence.

I know of no evidence to suggest that this system has failed. To abolish it now and replace it with "real time" sentencing means either a massive increase in the size of the prison population, or a dramatic reduction in the length of sentences passed by the courts.

It would to my mind be a great pity if a penal policy which has been so generally accepted should once again become the subject of party political dispute.

Yours faithfully,
MARK CARLISLE,
House of Lords.
January 31.

From Mr D. P. Marchessini

Sir. Outside Wonderland, it is well known that the number of people in the world capable of taking a human life in cold blood is very small indeed, and that furthermore this number is not elastic.

The suggestion that a stiffer sentence will turn a non-murderer into a murderer flies in the face of human nature and human experience. Indeed, if the Lord Justice's argument is followed to its logical conclusion, the best way to reduce murders is to abolish prison sentences altogether.

Under our proposals, as implemented by the Government, all prisoners serving sentences of up to four years must now spend half of their

La Fenice before and after the fire

From Mr Gavin Hooper

Sir. As the owner of a flat in Venice I was reassured by your front page picture today (our roof was visible and unsinged), but sad that in your report you described the fire that destroyed the Fenice theatre as "a further blow to the image of Venice".

The sinking and pollution have been addressed, and to a very large extent, halted or indeed reversed. Historical problems of settlement (due to a lowering of the water table) have left the city with perhaps a higher spring tide than is ideal. However, the city has always flooded and thus cleansed itself. The idea of an artificial lagoon to prevent the rising of the water is being considered and will probably be rejected for this reason.

The problem of pollution and water extraction by industry in Mestre across the lagoon is pretty well a thing of the past. Laws with serious penalties exist and are enforced.

Erosion and decay are part and parcel of a city built on a lagoon, and over-exuberant repair is almost as damaging as neglect. In a city as fragile as Venice constant vigilance and renewal is required, but the myth that it is sinking into polluted oblivion just is not true. Nor does it help hard-working fundraisers or give credit to those who have made restoration possible.

The tragedy is that although the Fenice will rise again, inevitably there will be a diversion of funds from other vital projects.

Yours faithfully,
GAVIN HOOPER,
Calle de Le Veste, 204 San Marco,
30124 Venice, Italy.
January 31.

From Mr Iain Mackintosh

Sir. The auditorium of La Fenice was as 18th-century as *Der Rosenkavalier*. Antoni Selva's 1792 design was rebuilt in Empire style in 1836, had the roccoco applied in 1852 and was modernised in 1937.

The original 5m deep forestage, where the singer performed within the volume of the house, was nibbled away to nothing, pushing action and settings upstage behind a 19th-century picture frame and making a nonsense of the sightlines from Selva's side boxes where I sat on my visit last year.

The restorations of the 1748 and 1753 opera houses of Bayreuth and Munich, in 1935 and 1953 respectively, also abolished the acting forestage and moved the performer upstage behind an inappropriate picture frame.

Today, directors and designers wish to reverse this trend and recover the immediacy of music theatre by bringing performers and settings through the arch into the house. It would be sad therefore if we either built new opera houses or restored great 18th-century ones in obsolete 20th-century formats.

There is a case for restoring Selva's original interior but less of a case for freezing the evolution of the great theatre in its Thirties guise.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
(AIN MACKINTOSH
(Design Director,
Theatre Projects Consultants,
3 Apollo Studios,
Charlton Kings Road, NW5).

From Dr Roy A. Russell

Sir. My wife and I have visited Venice five times in the last eight years at differing times of the year; during the 20 days or so we have spent there no opera has been performed and La Fenice has not been open for the casual visitor to appreciate this "jewel".

I trust that you are not proposing that it should be ... rebuilt, again, just as it was" (leading article, January 31), without advocating that it should be made more accessible to a wider audience and more positive in its approach.

Yours sincerely,
ROY RUSSELL,
Leckonby House,
Great Eccleston, Preston, Lancashire.

What's in a name?

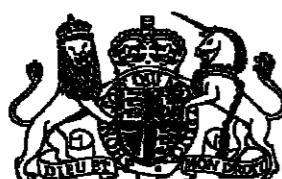
From Mr William Harmer

Sir. The confusion caused by having 11 Christophs in the Aleric School under-12 football side (report, February 1) is surely another example of the downside of over-familiarity: what on earth is wrong with using surnames, as was accepted practice when I was at prep school in the 1950s?

Yours faithfully,
HARMER,
Barnfield Farm, Hullavington,
Chippingham, Wiltshire.

Whinge to win

From the Minister at the Australian High Commission



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

February 2: The Princess Royal this afternoon visited the Junior School in Stanney and laid the foundation stone. Her Royal Highness later visited Stanley Museum.

The Princess Royal afterwards attended a Race Meeting at Stanley Racecourse and presented the prizes to the winners.

Her Royal Highness this evening attended a Farewell Dinner at Government House.

ST JAMES'S PALACE

February 2: The Prince of Wales, Chairman, this afternoon gave a Luncheon for Board Members of the new trust formed by The Prince of Wales' Committee.

KENSINGTON PALACE

February 2: The Duchess of

Gloucester, Patron, Plan International (UK), this morning received Mr Stephen Bingham on relinquishing the appointment of National Director and Mrs Anna Wardman on assuming the appointment.

The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester today received the Ambassador of Denmark (His Excellency Mr Rudolph Thorsing-Peterson) and Mrs Thorsing-Peterson.

YORK HOUSE

ST JAMES'S PALACE

February 2: The Duke of Kent, President, the Engineering Council, today attended the Engineering in Action Forum, at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London SW1.

Royal engagements

TODAY:

Prince Edward will attend a luncheon followed by the Rugby Union match between England and Wales at Twickenham at 12.30.

TOMORROW:

Prince Edward, as Patron of the Scottish Badminton Union, will attend the finals of the Hydro-Electric Scottish National Championships at the Meadowbank Sports Centre, Edinburgh, at 12.45.

Weekend events

TODAY: The Queen's Life Guard mounts at Horse Guards at 11.00. The Queen's Guard mounts at Buckingham Palace at 11.30.

TOMORROW: The Queen's Life Guard mounts at Horse Guards at 11.00.

Chatelard School, Switzerland

A Reunion Buffet Tea is to be held near London, on Sunday, May 5, 1996. Telephone 01753 662993.

Mowden School, Hove

Mowden School is celebrating its centenary during 1996. Any Old Boys who have not yet received details please contact the Headmaster's Secretary at Mowden School, The Droveway, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 6LU.

Horners' Company

The following have been elected officers of the Horners' Company for the ensuing year:

Master, Mr David J. Rogers; Upper Warden, Mr Charles K. Cartwright.

Dinner

Lord Byron

Lord Blake presided at a dinner debate of the Byron Society held last night at the House of Lords by courtesy of Lord Byron, who was also the principal speaker. The Countess of Eldon, the Earl of Ulster, the Earl of Liverpool and the Viscount Maitland also spoke.

Weekend birthdays

TODAY: Mr G.A. Allan, Headmaster, Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen; 60; Sir Anthony Alment, obstetrician and gynaecologist; 74; the Earl of Antrim; 61; Miss Gillian Ayres, painter; 81; Mr Val Doonican, singer; 67; Air Chief Marshal Sir John Gossell, 71; the Earl of Hardwicke, 75; Mr Gavin Henderson, Principal, Trinity College of Music; 48; Sir Edgar Keating, former MP and company director; 91; Mr James A. Michener, author; 88; Baroness O'Cathain, 58; Miss Elaine Padmore, opera singer and director; 49; Brigadier the Hon Dame Mary Pihl, former director, WRAC; 80; Lord Sherfield, 92; Mr Glen Tetley, choreographer; 70; Mr Franke Vaughan, singer; 77.

TOMORROW: Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Ashmore, 75; Mr John Bird, former MP; 70; Mr Colin Black, former chairman, Scottish Widows' Fund and Life Assurance

University news

London

University College New Fellows and Honorary Fellows 1995-96

Fellows:

Professor Geoffrey Burnstock, Professor of Anatomy and Head of the Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology, UCL, since 1975; Ms Vera Chirwa, barrister and political rights campaigner; Malawi; Mr Linan Ciro, chairman of the Nigerian operation of the Union Training Group; Tate & Lyle; Dr Brian Chapman, National Physical Laboratory, Chief Executive 1990-95; Mr Daniel Charles Cohen, executive director, Cadogan plc; Ms Beatrice De Cardi, archaeologist; Professor Keith James Ives, Emeritus Professor of Civil Engineering, UCL, since 1992; Mr Roger Alan Lyons, general secretary, Manufacturing Science and Finance Union, since 1992; Sir Ronald Mason, Chairman, UCL Hospitals NHS Trust, 1993-95; Dr Barbara Mary Frances Pearce, MRC Molecular Biology Laboratory, Cambridge, since 1982; Professor John Howard Ridd, Emeritus Professor of Chemistry, UCL, since 1993; Mr Peter Snow, Head of Theatre Design, Slade School of Fine Art, UCL, since 1988.

Honorary Fellows:

Professor Michael Geoffrey Audley-Charris, Emeritus Professor of Geology, UCL, since 1993; Professor Timothy John Biscoe, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Hong Kong University, since 1992; Mr Maurice Hatter, chairman and owner, IMO Precision Controls; Professor Sir Frank Kermode, Lord Northcliffe Professor of Modern English Literature, UCL, 1967-74; Professor Desmond Roger Laurence, Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, UCL, since 1984; Mr Hugh Michael Priesley, Treasurer, UCL, since 1981.

Service dinner

HAC Mass Club

The Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs were the guests at a dinner of the Honourable Artillery Company Mess Club held last night at Armoury House. Colonel Sir Colm Cole, president, was in the chair. Colonel C.J. Martin, the Lord Mayor, Major-General R. Sanders and Lord McCall of Dulwich also spoke.



Commander Andrew Underwood, captain of *HMS Richmond*, the Royal Navy's newest Type 23 frigate, yesterday welcomed the mayors of three Richmonds to his ship, moored in the Port of London. From left: Leonidas Young, Jr. Mayor of Richmond, Virginia, Bob King, Mayor of Richmond upon Thames, and Katherine Carr, Mayor of Richmond, Yorkshire

Latest wills

Mr Arthur Frederick Holt, of Ambleside, Cumbria, Liberal MP for Bowness West 1951-64, left estate valued at £209,779 net.

Professor Eric Barff Birley, of Greenhead, Northumberland, Professor of Romano-British History and Archaeology at Durham University 1957-71, left estate valued at £164,000 net.

St. John Nutall Maxwell Entwistle, of Stone Hall, Settrington, Cumbria, left estate valued at £102,267 net.

His wife, Lady Jean Entwistle McAlpine, left estate valued at £170,668 net.

Miss Ida Gertrude Carroll, of Didsbury, Manchester, Dame of Management of the Royal Northern College of Music, left estate valued at £127,375.

Death notices:

Professor Michael Geoffrey Audley-Charris, Emeritus Professor of Geology, UCL, since 1993; Professor Timothy John Biscoe, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Hong Kong University, since 1992; Mr Maurice Hatter, chairman and owner, IMO Precision Controls; Professor Sir Frank Kermode, Lord Northcliffe Professor of Modern English Literature, UCL, 1967-74; Professor Desmond Roger Laurence, Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, UCL, since 1984; Mr Hugh Michael Priesley, Treasurer, UCL, since 1981.

Horners' Company

The following have been elected officers of the Horners' Company for the ensuing year:

Master, Mr David J. Rogers; Upper Warden, Mr Charles K. Cartwright.

Service dinner

HAC Mass Club

The Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs were the guests at a dinner of the Honourable Artillery Company Mess Club held last night at Armoury House. Colonel Sir Colm Cole, president, was in the chair. Colonel C.J. Martin, the Lord Mayor, Major-General R. Sanders and Lord McCall of Dulwich also spoke.

Weekend birthdays

Society, 66; the Hon Sir Clive Besson, former MP; 78; Professor John Brown, Astronomer Royal for Scotland; 49; Mr Jim Cunningham, MP; 55; Dr P.E. Thompson Hancock, oncologist; 92; Lord Haslam, 73; the Earl of Hillsborough; 77; Mr R.C. Hoban, writer; 71; the Marquis of Huntly, 52; Mr David Malouf, novelist; 62; the Hon Mrs Ray Michie, MP; 62; Lord Moncreiffe, 70; Mr Stanley Newens, MEP; 60; Lord Justice Nicholson, 63; Mr Tim O'Sullivan, former Governor, Holloway prison; 55; Mr Charles Pollard, Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police; 60; Mr William Renn, MP; 76; Mr David Shawcross, QC, 54; Mr John Tizard, former managing director, London Philharmonic Orchestra; 53; Mr Norman Wisdom, actor and comedian; 81; the Rev Prof J. Scott, 81; Mr Edward Pickering, astronomer, Cambridge; 188; Mr Matthew Yates, athlete; 27.

BMDS: 0171 782 7272

PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

From his life story we have all received grace upon grace for the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1: 16 (RSB)

BIRTHS

BLACKMORE - On January 22nd, 1996, to Linda (née Gossell) and Peter, a daughter, Marissa Constantine, a sister to Jessica.

CHAPMAN - On January 28th, 1996, to Sandy (née Mafford) and Phil, a son, Nicholas James, a brother to Christopher.

COOK - On January 27th, 1996, to Lin (née Jenkins) and Martin, a daughter, Marissa.

DAVY - On 29th January 1996, to Debbie (née Jellett) and Derek, a daughter, a sister to Cassandra.

GARGU - On January 26th, 1996, to Sandra (née Maggs) and Ranjan, a beautiful baby girl.

HAGGS - On January 26th, 1996, to Emma (née Lawton) and Simon, a daughter, Marissa, a sister to Felicity.

JENKINS - See Cook.

JOHNSON - On January 30th at The Portland Hospital, to Laurence (née Lister) and Kevin, a beautiful son, Adam.

OLIVER - On January 27th at The Portland Hospital, to Karen (née Tadek) and Jon, a beautiful daughter, Tamara Dorothy.

CATH - Horace Charles, formerly of Buxton-on-the-Heath, peacefully on February 1st 1996 aged 96. Beloved son of Loraine and a much loved father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Beloved son of Tom. Funeral Service will take place at St. Deiniol's Church, Little Pownall, on Saturday, February 3rd at 11.00 am.

COHEN - On Saturday, January 26th, 1996, at home in Barmouth, Australia. John Newbold Cohen, aged 64 years. Much loved father of Mark, beloved father of Karen, David, Russell and Cath. Much loved son in Australia, any enquiries via Tel: 01654 781000. Tel: 01654 781000.

COWAN - On 1st February, Robin Buchanan died suddenly but peacefully in his sleep. Beloved husband of Marissa, dear father of Rosemary and his grandchildren. The funeral service will be held at St Peter's Church, Cowden, 1st February 1996 at 1.30pm, followed by private cremation. Family flowers only. Donations, if desired, to Rosemary's Trust, 100 High Street, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

ENDERSON - On 31st January 1996, suddenly at Buxton-on-the-Heath, Cottage, Buxton. Beloved wife of Tim and mother of Anna and Eleanor. Service at Buxton Parish Church, Buxton on Friday 2nd February at 2.00 pm.

HUBBARD - Miriam died following a short illness on Friday 1st February 1996 at 8.00 am. Beloved wife of Eddie and a loved grandmother and great-grandmother of the family. Donations if desired to Cancer Research Campaign c/o G.M. Ltd, 2 Lion Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 7EP.

BURKE - On Saturday, January 27th, 1996, at St. Mary's Convent, formerly at Outlands and Thames Ditton. Vigil reception at St. Mary's on Friday 2nd February at 2.00 pm. No flowers please but donations to Cancer Research Campaign c/o G.M. Ltd, 2 Lion Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 7EP.

BUCK - On Saturday, January 27th, 1996, at St. Mary's Convent, formerly at Outlands and Thames Ditton. Vigil reception at St. Mary's on Friday 2nd February at 2.00 pm. No flowers please but donations to Cancer Research Campaign c/o G.M. Ltd, 2 Lion Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 7EP.

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NEWS

Kohl plea on nation state

■ Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, yesterday urged Europe to turn its back on the nation state and resist efforts by Britain at the Maastricht review to slow the advance to deeper integration of the Union. Speaking in Louvain, Belgium, he voiced alarm over the growing opposition to the plan for monetary union and steps towards greater harmony. Page 1

IRA is blamed for attack

■ The IRA was believed to have been responsible for an attack on the home of an off-duty police officer in which 57 shots were fired yesterday. The Northern Ireland Office said they were unaware of any motive for the shooting near the village of Moy, Co Tyrone. Pages 1, 20 and 21

Ashdown security

Paddy Ashdown agreed to round-the-clock bodyguards at his constituency in Somerset after his car was destroyed by a petrol bomb. Page 1

Mother's victory

A mother who was accused of being over-protective towards her disabled son won the right to influence his life. Page 3

University talks

Vice-chancellors stepped back from voting on proposals to charge university entrants £300 after an offer of talks. Page 4

Rocket triumph

Steve Bennett's attempt to become the first amateur to put a rocket into space took a giant leap a successful launch. Page 5

Ten life sentences

A released mental patient who slashed the throats of 15 women in a department store was given 10 life sentences. Page 9

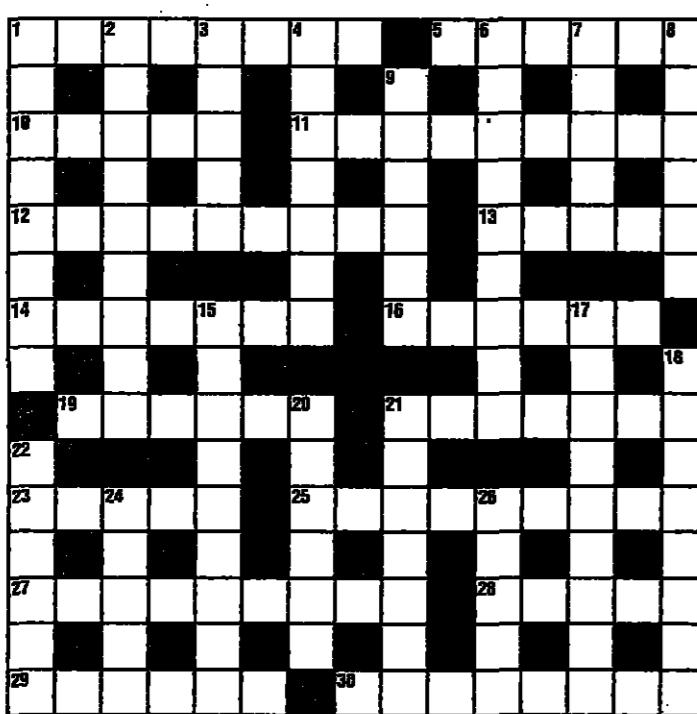
Fox destroys the royal flamingos

■ Buckingham Palace was reeling from its worst security breach since Michael Fagan sat on the Queen's bed and asked for a cigarette. A fox has penetrated the garden and killed the royal flamingos. Police discovered the mutilated bodies of six birds close to their ornamental pond home. Page 1

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,081

ABERLOUR A limited edition, 1970 vintage bottle of Aberlour single malt whisky, the only malt whisky to have twice won the prestigious Gold Medal and Pot Still Trophy at the International Wine & Spirit Competition, will be given for the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 480, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The winners and solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address



ACROSS

- At sea, read lots in navigational guide (8).
- Impostor displays activity and enthusiasm (6).
- Short run in appearance in silly play (5).
- Religion takes me in paths of the normal (9).
- Don't anticipate being in trouble after day (4,3).
- Emblem and name required to start computer session (3,2).
- Group of soldiers cut short prescribed exercise etc. (7).
- Fast car is what attracts attention? Stepped on it (3,3).
- Bit suspiciously at fire into fun-gus (6).
- Rubbish in the entrance can be a killer (7).
- At the proper moment, put chalk here (2,3).
- Bagman pleased to receive several pounds (4).
- Rain's friend gets new house in Curnish town (9).
- For a change must appear in pony horse (5).
- Sacred Hindu text — outbursts when false plural is seen (6).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,075

SOLUTION

HOSEA SUBALTERN

AIC HUUI LE

RIDERHOOD SHEER

DLO TGY V

BREAST RECREATE

AIS SHEET

COFFINNAJL FISH

KOCAG FOY

SMUG MISALIGNED

NUL RE R

REDCROSS PLASMA

ELG PSDCN

ABIDE APPRISING

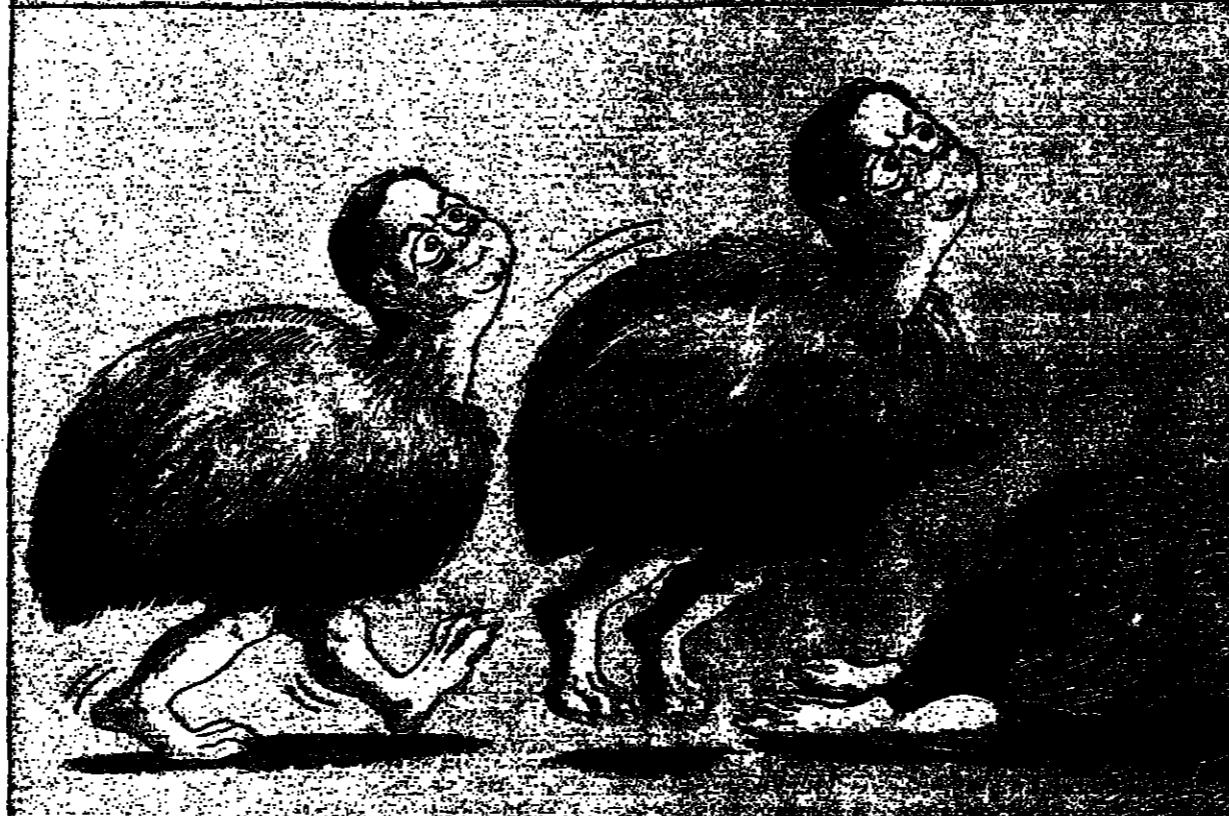
RNN CONOE

MIGHTIEST GENO

LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: S May, Mortimer, Reading; N Hart, Woking; D L Stevenson, Edinburgh; P L Wyatt, London; T Donovan, Knockydon, Dublin

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NATURE NOTES



OPINION

To the convention: It would be tragic if Sinn Fein were to refuse to embrace the most important elections of all — to a body which could bring Northern Ireland's people together. Page 20

Per amateur ad astra: Rocks are fired by the imagination as well as liquid hydrogen, ions — or even sugar. Page 21

LETTERS

Judges on sentencing: La Fennec and the fire; practising forgiveness; women at the top; A & L flotation. Page 21

OBITUARIES

Leonor Fini, painter; Peter Brooks, aero-engineer; Ben Tart, lifeboat coxswain; Julian Hill, chemist who discovered nylon. Page 23

RUGBY

Airports: British Airways is to create 1,000 new jobs as it switches flights from Heathrow to Gatwick. Page 25

Toy Wars: Mattel, the Barbie doll maker, has abandoned its \$5.2 billion offer for Hasbro after accusing the rival American toy company of launching a "scorched-earth" campaign to remain independent. Page 25

Marks: The FT-SE 100 gained 28.5 points to 3781.3. Sterling rose from \$3.6 to \$3.8 after rises from \$1.5130 to \$1.5190 and from DM2.2953 to DM2.295. Page 25

RUGBY

Rugby union: Today's meeting between Scotland and France is likely to be the defining match of the five nations' championship. England and Wales meet at Twickenham. Pages 47, 48

Cricket: England fly-out to Pakistan for the World Cup today with the Pakistani government promising that they will take all possible security measures. Page 48

Markets: David Barry's future at Blackburn looks increasingly uncertain after he was again omitted from the squad. Page 42

FOOTBALL

Unhappy birthday: Cluny "amplification" and a muddled production mar a centenary staging of Puccini's *La Bohème* in the Albert Hall, says Rodney Milnes. Page 17

Wembley v Manchester: Who will win the race to build Britain's national stadium? Marcus Binney reports. Page 19

Cover story: Alison Hartrage's children visit her last mountain

Films of the week: The original *Sabrina Fair*

REVIEWS

MAGAZINE

Robert Crampton meets a Chaplin of the 90s. Page 8

Louis Farrakhan: Dream of a racially divided America. Page 26

WEEKEND

New Britannia: Vision of a British flagship. Pages 1, 3

SOLO STAR

How to build your own wood. Page 4

Books: Bestsellers and new paperbacks. Pages 7, 8

FORESTY

How to build your own wood. Page 4

Books: Bestsellers and new paperbacks. Pages 7, 8

10 15

Solo star: The brains behind East 17. Page 4

Wine: A Sony Wide-Screen television. Page 3

VISION

How to build your own wood. Page 4

Books: Bestsellers and new paperbacks. Pages 7, 8

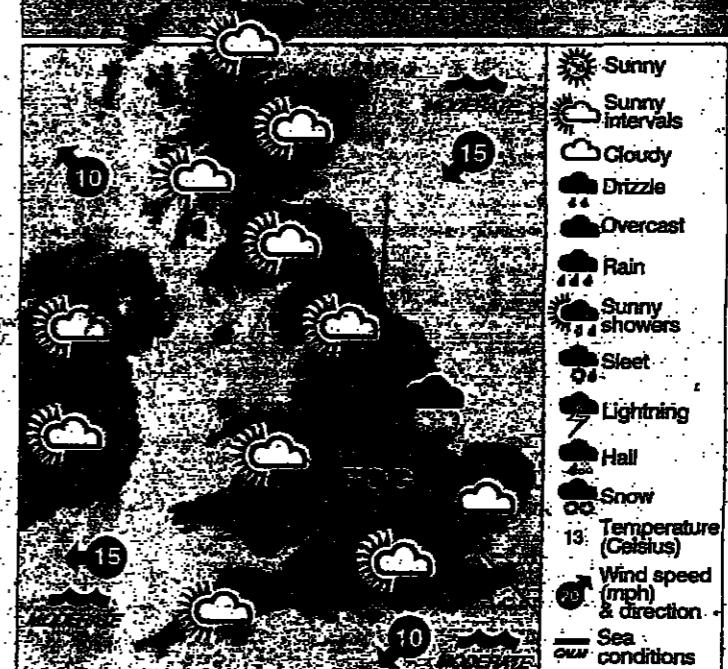
MOTORING

Cars are now being sold to appeal to the fantasies of the drivers. Page 19

CLOTHES

Cover story: Alison Hartrage's children visit her last mountain

Films of the week: The original *Sabrina Fair*



TIMES WEATHERCAST

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, 24 hours a day, dial 0333 401 followed by the code:

Greater London: 701

Ken/Surrey/Sussex: 702

Devon/Hants & IOW: 703

Wes/Cards/Wales: 704

West/Cards/Wales: 705

Beds/Bucks/Oxon: 706

Beds/Hants & Essex: 707

West/Mid & Glam & Gwent: 708

Shrops/Herts & Warks: 709

Central/Andards: 710

W/Cards/Wales: 711

Lincs/Humbershire: 712

Dyfed & Pwys: 714

Gwynedd & Cardif: 715

W/S Yorks & Dales: 717

N/E England: 718

Cumbria & Lake District: 719

Scot/Islands: 720

Edin/S'f/Leeds/Buck/B'f/Not: 721

E/Central Scotland: 723

W/Cards & H'lands: 724

Cathness, Orkney & Shetland: 725

N Ireland: 727

Weathercall is charged at 35p per minute (cheap rate) and 45p per minute at all other times.

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic/roadwatch information, 24 hours a day, dial 0333 401 followed by the code:

London & SE traffic, roadworks: 731

Essex/Hants/Bucks/Oxon: 732

Kent/Surrey/Sussex/Hants: 734

West/Mid & Glam & Gwent: 735

North East England: 742

North-West England: 743

Scot/Islands: 745

AA Roadwatch is charged at 35p per minute (cheap rate) and 45p per minute at all other times.

HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY

Sun rises: 7.37 am

Sun sets: 4.53 pm

Moon sets: 4.09 pm

Full moon tomorrow

London 4.33 pm to 7.25 am

Bristol 4.02 pm to 7.45 am

Edinburgh 4.01 pm to 7.01 am

Manchester 4.01 pm to 7.50 am

Penzance 5.16 pm to 7.53 am

AA Roadwatch is charged at 35p per minute (cheap rate) and 45p per minute at all other times.

TOMORROW

Sun rises: 7.38 am

Sun sets: 4.54 pm

Moon sets: 5.11 pm

Last quarter February 12

London 4.54 pm to 7.34 am

Bristol 4.23 pm to 7.45 am

Edinburgh 4.11 pm to 7.01 am

Manchester 4.56 pm to 7.49 am

Penzance 5.20 pm to 7.51 am

AA Roadwatch is charged at 35p per minute (cheap rate) and 45p per minute at all other times.

HIGH TIDES

TODAY